

European Affairs Update

APRIL 2026



Presidency Council of the European Union: Jan-Jun 2026
Cyprus. July-Dec 2026 Ireland. Jan-Jul 2027 Lithuania.

Committee of Ministers (CoE) chairmanship: Nov 25-May 26
Republic of Moldova. May 26-10 Nov Monaco. Nov 26-May 27 Montenegro.

European Capitals of Culture 2026: Oulu (Finland), Trenčín (Slovakia).

Did you know? Most Presidencies issue a music playlist, here are [Songs from Cyprus](#).

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European Union

EU Youth Conference: Youth-friendly Europe

20 Mar: The [EU Youth Conference was held online 18-20 Mar 2026](#) as part of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU. The Lefkosia EU Youth Conference marks the final stage of the 11th cycle, which focuses on European Youth Goal 1: Connecting the EU with Youth. This goal aims to foster young people's sense of belonging to the European project and to build a stronger and more trusting relationship between the EU and young people. The conference brought together youth delegates, policymakers, institutional representatives and experts from across Europe. They have discussed proposals that advance the youth-friendliness, accessibility and transparency of public policies through eight interactive workshops. The recommendations emerging from these discussions will be consolidated in the Council resolution, to be adopted later during the Cyprus Presidency.

Montenegro hopes to become 28th EU member state in 2028

24 Apr: The twenty-second meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee between the EU and Montenegro (JCC) was held in Podgorica. Opening the meeting, the Minister of European Affairs stated that the commencement of drafting the Accession Treaty represents the final phase of the negotiation process and a clear signal that [Montenegro's membership in the European Union](#) is a goal set to be achieved in 2028.

2028-2034 budget: MEPs want a 10% increase to support EU priorities

15 Apr: The [Interim Report of the European Parliament on the Multiannual Financial Framework](#) (MFF) was adopted, outlining the institution's initial position on the next long-term EU budget. MEPs considered a 10% increase compared to the Commission's July 2025 proposal is the minimum amount of money the EU needs to meet its commitments, respond to citizens' expectations, and address major challenges, including large-scale warfare in Europe, economic and social challenges, a competitiveness gap and the worsening climate and biodiversity crises. They called for greater support for key programmes including the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), Horizon Europe, the Connecting Europe Facility, Erasmus+, AgoraEU and the civil protection mechanism. The interim report proposes an allocation of €10.72 billion for AgoraEU in the next MFF, representing a ~25% increase in funding on the proposal, the highest percentage increase of any programme listed under Heading 2 (Competitiveness, Prosperity, and Security) in the Interim Report. Parliament will start negotiations with the Council on the regulation setting the structure and main figures of the 2028-2034 budget after the plenary vote on 29 April. As the MFF regulation requires Parliament's consent to be approved, member states are expected to take MEPs' requests into account.

500+ organisations call for an increased budget for AgoraEU

8 Apr: A coalition of 500+ organisations representing Europe's cultural and creative sectors, independent media and journalism, civil society and democracy actors sent an [open letter to leaders of the EU institutions](#) calling for a substantial increase in funding for the AgoraEU programme – which includes funding for culture, independent media and journalism, audiovisual media, and civil society organisations across its pillars – in the next long-term EU budget (2028-2034). Specifically, the organisations strongly support the position of the European Parliament to increase the budget allocation of the AgoraEU programme and call on the EU institutions to ensure that it remains a priority during negotiations on the next long-term EU budget. The 500+ organisations consider that a strong, well-resourced AgoraEU programme is vital at the European level.

Alliance submits proposals for amendments to Parliament's draft report on Horizon

14 Apr: The European Commission's proposal for the next Horizon Europe programme (2028–2034) has no dedicated component for culture or artistic research and the European Parliament's draft report on Horizon does not address this. The draft also proposes to dissolve Horizon's Society pillar entirely, folding it into a Competitiveness pillar as a fifth policy window. The Artistic Research Alliance, with other organisations, submitted [proposals for amendments to the Parliament's draft report](#) with core demands: Rename 'Global Societal Challenges' policy window to 'Culture and Global Societal Challenges' and explicitly include culture in its scope; Double the budget for culture-related research: from €2.28 billion in the current 2021–2027 Horizon to €5 billion in 2028–2034. Their concern is that without a dedicated component, the recognition of arts, cultural and creative sectors and industries as a strategic priority for Europe's research and innovation will be lost.

CULT committee meeting

The most recent [Committee on Culture and Education \(CULT\)](#) meeting was held on 15-16 April 2026. MEPs held an Exchange of Views with Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu to discuss, in particular, the Erasmus + proposal under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the Intergenerational fairness strategy. Other topics tackled were the Education Package from the Commission Work Programme 2026, consisting of European school alliances and Basic Skills Support Scheme and the 2030 Roadmap on the future of digital education and skills. The next meeting is 4-5 May 2026.

CULT committee in London

18 Feb: A [delegation from the CULT committee visited London](#) where they met with representatives of the UK government and the governments of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The delegation also met with representatives of the educational and cultural institutions, youth and creative sectors. All participants in the meetings were unanimous in welcoming the reassociation of the UK to Erasmus+ programme for 2027. Both sides recognised the short timeline to launch the application process for 2027. Regarding the Creative Europe and the future AgoraEU programmes, on which the UK government does not currently plan to negotiate a reassociation, representatives of the creative sectors told MEPs that being out of the EU programmes has negatively affected their international opportunities and forced them to look for other sources of funding.

Council of Europe

Recommendation on the importance of teaching regional history adopted

1 Apr: The 50th session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities adopted a [recommendation on the teaching of regional history](#), through both formal and non-formal education. Educational initiatives with local and regional museums, archives and other local heritage partners, should be implemented. The Congress noted that while global and national narratives are crucial for understanding broad trends and movements, regional history offers a more human-scaled perspective that closely connects young people to their community, culture, and heritage. However, regional history lacks recognition and is poorly represented in the history curricula in most European countries. Teachers often lack training, materials and resources, including access to primary sources. In the adopted recommendation, the Congress calls on local and regional authorities to recognise the importance and complementarity of regional history alongside national, European, and broader international history, and to work together with national authorities to ensure the allocation of sufficient time, space and resources for teaching regional history. Creation of digital collections of historical sources (written, oral, material, visual), and the compilation of lists and maps of regional monuments, archaeological and historical sites, museums and archives should be supported and promoted.

First meeting of the Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV)

25 Mar: [First meeting of the CDENV](#) was held in Strasbourg on 24 and 25 March 2026. The CDENV supports the effective implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment, adopted by the Organisation's member States in May 2025. At its inaugural meeting, the CDENV focused on strategies to enhance transparency, improve access to environmental information, and combat misinformation and disinformation related to environmental issues. Participants exchanged best practices and explored how to better integrate nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches into wider governance frameworks, while upholding human rights standards, including gender equality. The Committee's second meeting is scheduled for autumn 2026.

Funding and investments

Budgets and programmes

Multiannual Financial framework (MFF)

The multiannual financial framework for **2021-2027** was implemented January 2021. €1.074 trillion is available: find out how the EU distributes the budget of the [Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027](#). The **2026 budget** was adopted in Nov 2025.

Please consult the sources provided to check details of calls, as they may change.

Creative Europe

Open calls

European Cooperation projects Medium scale ([CREA-CULT-2026-COOP-2](#)) Deadline 5 May 2026.

European Cooperation projects Small scale ([CREA-CULT-2026-COOP-1](#)) Deadline 5 May 2026.

Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe 2026/2027 work programmes

11 Dec: The European Commission adopted the [Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026/2027](#), with a total budget of €14 billion. It introduces several measures aimed at simplifying processes, enhancing transparency and inclusiveness. It also introduces horizontal calls, which are designed to connect different parts of Horizon Europe in support of key strategic areas. These calls ensure that Horizon Europe is more in tune with the EU's evolving policies by tackling them in a consistent, cross-cluster, multidisciplinary way. The Clusters are: 1 Health; 2 Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society; 3 Civil Security for Society; 4 Digital, Industry and Space; 5 Climate, Energy and Mobility; 6 Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment.

Open calls. None.

Forthcoming calls

COST Open Call 2026

A COST Action is an interdisciplinary research network that brings together researchers and innovators to investigate a topic for four years. A COST Action has an estimated budget of €150,000 in its first year and on average €180,000 per year for the other three years. The [2026 Open Call for new COST Action proposals will open 31 July 2026](#) and close 28 October 2026.

Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026-2027 work programme

The [indicative calls can be downloaded here](#). They include:

2026

Preventing and fighting illicit trafficking of cultural goods ([HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-07](#)). Intended opening: 12 May 2026, deadline 23 September 2026.

Towards a fair and transparent market for cultural and creative content in the era of generative AI ([HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-04](#)). Intended opening: 12 May 2026, deadline 23 September 2026.

Creative alliances: Fostering global partnerships in cultural policies and CCI innovation ([HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-05](#)). Intended opening: 12 May 2026, deadline 23 September 2026.

2027

Open topic: Impact-driven research on realising the full potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative industries ([HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-HERITAGE-09-two-stage](#)). Intended opening: 2 March 2027, deadline 30 September 2027.

Culture, heritage and creative industries for health and well-being. ([HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-04](#)). Intended opening: 13 May 2027, deadline 23 September 2027.

Towards a consolidated culture and creativity driven European innovation ecosystem ([HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-01](#)). Intended opening: 13 May 2027, deadline 23 September 2027.

Re-imagining the creative economy: the interplay between the cultural and creative sectors and industries and the social economy ([HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-05](#)). Intended opening: 13 May 2027, deadline 23 September 2027.

Future-proofing sustainable cultural tourism ([HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-06](#)). Intended opening: 13 May 2027, deadline 23 September 2027.

Societal impact of cultural heritage ([HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-07](#)). Intended opening: 13 May 2027, deadline 23 September 2027.

Safeguarding & transmission of intangible cultural heritage ([HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-08](#)). Intended opening: 13 May 2027, deadline 23 September 2027

European Research Council

Open calls

ERC Proof of Concept ([ERC-2026-POC](#)). Deadline 17 September 2026.

Forthcoming calls

Indicative schedule of calls for [2026 work programme available here](#). Call for Advanced Grants (ERC-2026-AdG) is expected to open 28 May 2026.

Digital Europe

The Digital Europe Programme is the first EU programme that aims to accelerate the recovery and drive the digital transformation of Europe. Worth €7.6 billion, the Programme is a part of the next long-term EU budget, (the Multiannual Financial Framework), covering 2021-2027. It will provide funding for projects in five crucial areas: supercomputing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, advanced digital skills, and ensuring the wide use of digital technologies across the economy and society. The Digital Europe Programme will complement the funding available through other EU programmes, such as the Horizon Europe programme for research and innovation and the Connecting Europe Facility for digital infrastructure, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Structural funds.

There are no open or forthcoming calls with direct cultural heritage relevance.

The Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)

1 Dec 2025: The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme was launched in 2021 and runs for seven years until 2027. The work programme 2026-2027 was adopted with a value of c.€279m in 2026 and c.€299m in 2027.

Open calls. No open calls of relevance.

Forthcoming calls

Calls on Town Twinning and Remembrance expected in 2026. [Indicative calls planning available here.](#)

Erasmus+

11 Dec 2025: The [2026 call for proposals and indicative schedule was published.](#)

There are no open or forthcoming calls with direct cultural heritage relevance.

UK participation: 17 Dec: following successful negotiations, it was announced that from 2027 young people from the EU and the UK will once again be able to benefit from Erasmus+. This includes learners, students, apprentices, teachers and staff in the fields of education, youth and sport.

Inactive funding streams

JPI on Cultural Heritage and Global Change- there have been no open calls since 2023.

Post-2020 European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (INTERREG)- programmes for the 2021-2027 period were agreed in January 2022. No more open calls are planned during the 2021-2027 programme.

Other calls

EAC Survey: The Role of Archaeological Repositories in Heritage Management

30 Apr: Archaeological repositories are more than just a final resting place for archaeological archives. They are the starting point of a new trajectory in which the information contained within the archaeological archives is distributed. Archaeological repositories facilitate research, exhibitions and more often than not allow the general public to connect with the material they conserve. The EAC Working Group for Archaeological Archives is analysing the evolving role of archaeological repositories in the process of archaeological heritage management and the cost of sustainable archiving. **This questionnaire is aimed directly at the managers of archaeological repositories**, i.e. the people that are responsible for the day-to-day operation of an archaeological repository. [Find the survey here](#).

EAC Survey: EAC communications and guidance survey

30 Apr: The EAC is repeating its communication survey of members (last conducted 2022). If you belong to an EAC member organisation and have not received the survey (but would like to), please [email the Assistant](#). This year, we are asking for feedback on our guidance publications, and non-members who use our guidance are also invited to complete this part of the survey, [you can find it using this link](#).

Call for proposals: Co-creating sustainable futures with museum collections

22 Apr: TOWCHED is a Horizon Europe project that explores how inclusive, arts-based and heritage-centred learning can foster sustainable and just development. Grounded in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, it supports museums and other collections-based organisations in contributing actively to societal transformation by becoming spaces for Education for Sustainable Development. From July 2026 to July 2027, the programme will support 10 selected museums, particularly small and medium-sized institutions, with capacity-building, practical tools, community-based collaboration, and financial assistance, to become "living laboratories" where collections inspire creativity and real-world learning for children and youth. [Deadline to apply for the grant and join the programme](#): 3 June 2026.

Call for applications: European Museum of the Year 2027

15 Apr: EMYA celebrates bold ideas and fresh thinking in museums across Europe — and the 2027 edition is especially meaningful as it marks the 50th anniversary of both EMYA and the Council of Europe Museum Prize. The Awards champion public quality, spark innovative exchange, and highlight sustainable, future-focused practice. The awards are open to museums which are nonprofit and opened or underwent a major transformation after January 2022. [Guidelines and FAQs are available](#), the call is open until 4 May 2026.

Survey: use of AI in Archaeology

15 Oct: The Managing Artificial Intelligence in Archaeology Cost Action have launched a [survey on the use of Artificial Intelligence in and around archaeology](#). The aim is to understand how professionals in this field perceive, use, and expect AI technologies to evolve, insights that will help guide future research, training and ethical discussions. The survey is anonymous, takes about 10-15 minutes, and is open to anyone working in or around archaeology, heritage, data science, or related disciplines

Call for entries: European Cultural Tourism Network Awards 2026

Cultural tourism is the fastest growing sector of European tourism and can contribute both to the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism in the EU and beyond, as well as to the sustainable future of cultural assets, heritage sites and local communities. The 2026 edition of the Awards for 'Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism' is organised by ECTN in partnership with Europa Nostra, the European Travel Commission and NECSTouR, supported by Europeana and in the framework of the INSPIRES SMP project. The Awards Contest is open to tourist destinations across Europe, to showcase their results and outputs in sustainable cultural tourism under several selected categories each year. [Deadline for call](#) 15 May.

Call for participants: Inclusive European Heritage Residency 2026

Europa Nostra and INTO – the International National Trusts Organisation – are organising the second edition of the Inclusive European Heritage Residencies 13-19 September 2026, in collaboration with Din l-Art Ħelwa – the National Trust for Malta. Around 10 heritage professionals will be selected to gather in Malta to exchange best practices, discuss key challenges, and explore strategies for building strong and resilient heritage organisations. [Deadline for call](#) 15 May.

Call for experts: Panel for the European Capital of Culture Action

The European Commission invites interested experts to apply for this open call for expressions of interest for the establishment of a pool of experts for potential members of the panel of experts for the European Union action European Capital of Culture. Applicants should submit their expression of interest through the [online form on EU Survey at](#) the latest 3 months before the list expires, on **31/12/2027**

Helpful sources on European funding

[‘EU & Me’ mobile app](#): synchronised with the EU Funding & Tenders Portal, this app is designed to be simple and accessible, offering on-the-go access to funding opportunities, programmes, project results, as well as the latest news and events.

[Creative Europe public dashboard](#): provides access to the programme’s performance metrics and data. The accompanying page “Creative Europe in numbers” guides you through the dashboard and offers ready-made dynamic charts to get you initiated into the wealth of the programme data.

[CulturEU funding guide](#) covers opportunities linked to the European Commission’s flagship programme Creative Europe, as well as a wide spectrum of around 20 other EU funding programmes, from Digital Europe to LIFE and EU Structural Funds.

[How to communicate your project’](#) guide intended for beneficiaries of Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps and Creative Europe programmes.

Events and Calls for Papers

2026 Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA)

The 32nd EAA Annual Meeting will take place in Athens, Greece, **26-29 August 2026**. The theme is Resonant Pasts, and topics are: Widening perspectives in material culture studies; Crossing the divide. Archaeology and the open world; Museums and cultural heritage in the era of ‘permacrisis’; Transforming archaeology through interdisciplinarity; Changing worlds and environments in the past, present and future; Transient theories; Interaction, connectivity and mobility and Beyond the Middle Sea: rethinking the Mediterranean in motion. [Registration is open](#).

Call for participation: EAA/ EAC Working Group on Farming, Forestry and Rural Land Management

In recent years, the EAA/EAC Working Group on Farming, Forestry and Rural Land Management has organised several successful sessions at EAA examining the impact of different types of land use on archaeological heritage. They are now exploring creating guidance on land use change (LUC), similar to the previously published EAC guidelines on development-led archaeology and the use of LIDAR. To develop this further, the Working Group is organising a discussion session at the **2026 EAA conference in Athens. #94** Land-use Change (LUC) and archaeological heritage: Key concepts and considerations; working towards guidelines for best practice. [Find out more at the EAA website](#). The group is particularly interested in examples of the impact of LUC, as well as good and bad practices relating to archaeological heritage.

Call for papers: 10th Conference on Conservation of Architectural Heritage (CAH)

CAH aims at bringing together academics and professionals who care about heritage from different points of view and share their visions in protecting, preserving, and enhancing cultural heritage for the future. The conference will have three special sessions: Modern Heritage Interpretation and Conservation; Digital and Creative Heritage; Intersecting Perspectives on the Future of Religious Architectural Heritage: New Functions and Transformation Processes. The 2026 conference will be held at the Polytechnic University of Turin, 8-10 September 2026. [Call for papers now open.](#)

European Cultural Heritage Summit 2026

The [European Cultural Heritage Summit 2026](#) takes place from 26-30 May 2026 in Nicosia, Cyprus. Organised by Europa Nostra and the Europa Nostra Heritage Hub in Nicosia, the Summit is under the patronage of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU, and is supported by the European Union. Under the motto “Heritage as the Soul of Mare Nostrum”, the Summit will explore the (geo)political, societal and environmental relevance of heritage for Europe and the wider Mediterranean.

Online event: Reactivating historic places of worship

Across Europe, thousands of churches and other religious buildings face underuse, closure, or degradation. At the same time, communities in both urban and rural areas are searching for inclusive spaces that foster social cohesion, cultural participation, and sustainable local development. FRH, COMECE and the Catholic Private University Linz, will host the online event “Connected by heritage: Reactivating historic places of worship for a more sustainable, inclusive and aesthetic Europe”. This event will present current revitalisation perspectives and community-driven initiatives aimed at ensuring that religious heritage sites remain useful and meaningful spaces at the heart of towns and villages. [Event 12 June 2026, registration opens soon.](#)

20th annual EHHF meeting

The [20th edition of the Forum](#) will take place in will take place from 7-9 October in Zagreb, Croatia, hosted by the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture and Media. The annual meeting will provide the opportunity to discuss cultural heritage resilience in the face of contemporary challenges. Attendance by invitation only.

International Conference on Sustainable Development 2026

14th ISCD2026 is organized by the European Centre of Sustainable Development in collaboration with CIT University, it will be held in Rome, Italy, 9-10 September 2026. The theme is ‘Creating a unified foundation for the Sustainable Development: research, practice and education’ and includes the sub-theme ‘Sustainable Urbanism, Education, Governance, Human Development, Psychology, Sociology, Cultural Heritage Preservation, Social Equity, Community Engagement, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Health and Well-being, Public Health Systems’. The [call for papers is open until 30 July.](#)

NEMO European Museum Conference 2026

The conference takes place from 11-13 October 2026 in Vilnius, Lithuania. Join for inspiring panel discussions, workshops, networking opportunities, museum study visits and much more. [Registration opens in June 2026.](#)

31st CHNT-ICOMOS Annual Conference

The annual conference on Cultural Heritage and New Technologies will take place in Vienna, 11-13 November 2026 and online. The theme is “Getting Dirty – Back to the Roots of Cultural Heritage Work. Heritage in Action: From the Field to the Future.” [Call for papers open until 30 April 2026, registration open](#).

22nd ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium 2026

The ICOMOS GA2026 Scientific Symposium is held in Kuching , Malaysia, 17-24 October 2026, under the main theme: Living Heritage: Respect, Enhance, Accept, Partnership. The symposium aims to respond to the Triennial Scientific Plan 2024–2027 theme, “Disaster and conflict resilient heritage” by focusing on how we can respond to both disasters and conflicts in Cultural Heritage Sites. ICAHM will convene a session entitled: S1 – Heritage Management Planning Systems: Challenges, Lessons Learned and Potential New Approaches. [Early bird registration open until 16 July 2026](#).

The 28th ICOM General Conference will be held in Rotterdam in 2028

During the 40th session of the ICOM General Assembly, held on 14 November 2025 as part of the ICOM General Conference in Dubai, members voted to select Rotterdam as the next host city. ICOM Netherlands presented the winning bid under the theme “[Building Bridges. Connecting Worlds, Cultures, and Generations](#).”

Resources and Publications

Please find below a list of publications and resources on culture and cultural heritage related topics that have been published in the past months by EU and Council of Europe organs, UNESCO and European networks and projects.

[Articulating the Significance of Archaeological Sites](#) (EAC Guidelines 11) (European Archaeological Council 2026).

Makowska, A, Novák, D and Oniszczyk, A (eds) [Life after life of archaeological archives – accessibility and re-use of archaeological collections in heritage management](#).

Proceedings of the 2025 EAC Heritage Symposium held in Gdańsk, Poland (EAC Occasional Paper 21, Archaeolingua 2026)

[Life after Life of Archaeological Archives – Accessibility and Re-use of Archaeological Collections in Heritage Management](#). EAC symposium proceedings. Internet Archaeology: Issue 72 (2026)

[The European Archaeologist](#), Issue 87- Winter 2026 (EAA,2026)

Mendoza, M & Lakshminarayanan, A (eds) [Multicultural Religious Interactions in Ancient Central and South Asia](#) (EAA Themes in Contemporary Archaeology, 2026).

[Managing World Heritage: resource manual](#) (UNESCO 2026)

[Re|Shaping Policies for Creativity: we share, we act, we build](#) (UNESCO 2026)

[Study on the discoverability of diverse European cultural content in the digital environment: final report](#) (European Commission 2026)

[Towards a European Interdisciplinary Competence Centre to Combat the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage](#) (ANCHISE 2025)

Derudas, P et al (2026) [Observing Reuse of 3D Data in Archaeological Excavations](#) Internet Archaeology 71.

Börner, Wolfgang und Rohland, Hendrik (Hrsg.): [The World's Heritage in the Digital Age: New Technologies Towards Sustainable Research, Conservation and Communication](#), Heidelberg: Propylaeum, 2026 (Proceedings of the International Conference on Cultural Heritage and New Technologies, Vienna, Band 26).

[Spanish National Archaeology Plan](#) (Ministry of Culture of Spain, 2026) [available in Spanish and English].

Other updates

2026 Annual Meeting of the European Archaeological Council

[The 27th EAC General Assembly and Heritage Symposium](#) took place 19-20 March 2026 in Altamira, Santillana del Mar, Spain. The event was organised by the Ministry of Culture of Spain with collaboration of regional and local authorities, and was hosted by the Museum of Altamira. The theme of the heritage symposium was 'Bridging Borders in Heritage Protection: towards best practice for prevention of archaeological crime'.

ICOMOS Statement on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Context of the Escalation of Conflict in the Middle East

26 Mar: [ICOMOS reiterates its deep concern regarding the recent escalation of conflict in the Middle East](#) and its devastating human consequences. ICOMOS expresses its profound regret at the loss of life, the growing number of casualties, and displacement of populations in parts of the region, with serious implications for cultural continuity. ICOMOS strongly condemns any destruction – whether intentional or incidental – of cultural and natural heritage. ICOMOS recalls that cultural heritage must not be considered a target. ICOMOS is concerned by confirmed and reported damage to cultural heritage in several countries across the region, in particular several World Heritage sites. These incidents highlight the risk of irreversible loss. Cultural heritage forms part of essential social structures embedded in everyday life, sustaining continuity even in situations of displacement. Damage should therefore be understood not only as physical loss, but also as disruption to practices, shared reference systems and cultural anchors, including through loss of access, use and presence. Such losses directly affect the capacity of communities to sustain and transmit cultural life, while cultural heritage can also support continuity, identity and social cohesion in times of crisis. ICOMOS reiterates the

importance of respecting international humanitarian law and recalls the obligations set out in the 1954 Hague Convention and its Protocols. ICOMOS calls on all parties to respect their obligations under international law and to safeguard cultural heritage and the communities who sustain it.

UNESCO showcases the Lviv Culture Hub at the 2nd Ukraine Culture Conference

30 Mar: Held in Lviv 29-30 March 2026, the [2nd Ukraine Culture Conference](#) 'Cooperation for Resilience' highlighted the essential role of culture in times of war and reaffirmed UNESCO's commitment to safeguarding and promoting culture as a force for resilience, recovery and peace.

UNESCO and ALIPH reinforce cooperation for the protection of heritage at risk

26 Feb: UNESCO and the International alliance for the protection of heritage (ALIPH) announced the [signing of a new cooperation agreement to strengthen the protection of cultural heritage](#) threatened by armed conflicts and other crises, including those linked to climate change and technological developments. This renewed partnership builds on the results achieved in recent years and responds to the rapidly evolving risks facing heritage around the world. The new agreement, which covers 2026 to 2029, builds on a previous Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2019, and reaffirms the complementarity of the two organizations' mandates and capacities. It aims to strengthen operational coordination, facilitate the implementation of joint projects and develop innovative responses to emerging challenges, including the combined impacts of conflict, climate change, and natural disaster.

Human Rights Council Report on Nature Conservation and Cultural Rights

4 Mar: In November 2025, [ICOMOS submitted its response to the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights](#)' call for contributions on nature conservation and cultural rights. Drawing on examples from its global membership, ICOMOS addressed 12 key questions. The organisation shared insights on the relationship between nature conservation and cultural rights. The report highlights the mutual importance of cultural rights and nature conservation. It explains how cultural rights can strengthen existing conservation frameworks. At the same time, it examines situations in which conservation policies may risk infringing on those rights. Furthermore, the report explores when limits on either conservation goals or cultural rights may be justified under international human rights law. Particular attention is given to communities most affected by conservation policies and to the role of key stakeholders.

UNESCO report on cultural landscape

18 Feb: UNESCO has just launched the fourth edition of [Re|Shaping Policies for Creativity](#), which analyses a rapidly evolving cultural landscape shaped by digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), shifting global trade dynamics, and mounting threats to artistic freedom. A global monitoring report with data from over 120 countries, it points out the need for stronger policies to protect creators from widening inequalities. The report underscores that while cultural and creative industries are increasingly recognized as drivers of economic growth, social cohesion and sustainable development, the systems supporting them remain fragile and uneven.

Cultural Deal for Europe: Annual Policy Conversation 2026

10 Feb: The [sixth edition of the annual Cultural Deal for Europe Policy Conversation](#), entitled “When Culture Wins, Europe Wins”, took place in Brussels, bringing together over 250 participants from across Europe. The event continued the campaign’s call to place culture and heritage at the core of EU policies, to ensure the effective implementation of the Culture Compass for Europe, and to secure adequate and sustainable investment in culture — including the allocation of at least 2% of the EU budget in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028-2034). The Annual Policy Conversation took place at a pivotal moment, as discussions continue to intensify regarding Europe’s future political priorities and budgetary framework. Exchanges throughout the event highlighted the need to move beyond a sectoral approach to culture and to recognise it as a cross-cutting strategic asset contributing to Europe’s democratic values, social cohesion and competitiveness. The discussions also underlined the importance of cultural and civic spaces, heritage sites, independent media and cultural initiatives as environments that enable participation, dialogue and cooperation, thereby strengthening social cohesion and democratic engagement across Europe.

International Museum Day 2026: Museums Uniting a Divided World

On 18 May 2026, museums worldwide will mark [International Museum Day](#) under the theme “Museums Uniting a Divided World”. The theme highlights the potential of museums to act as bridges across cultural, social, and geopolitical divides, fostering dialogue, understanding, inclusion and peace within and between communities worldwide. Through International Museum Day, ICOM has been supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since 2020 and promotes a set of goals annually. This year’s theme aligns with the following three goals: SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities; SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions; SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals. Communications material and more details here.

2026 European Heritage Days ‘Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine’

25 Feb: the shared theme for [European Heritage Days](#) is ‘Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine’. Through this lens, events across the continent will be considering the importance of protecting cultural heritage through a range of modern challenges from climate change to digitalisation. As well as highlighting risks, the theme is also an opportunity to explore how individuals and communities can get involved in preserving local customs, historic buildings and the natural environment of their area through showcasing inspirational stories about reviving traditions, resistance to threats and reimagined ways to engage with heritage. The Heritage at Risk theme aims to explore a wide range of cultural topics, with key categories including protecting landscapes such as coastlines and traditional farmland, conserving architecturally significant sites from ancient ruins to modern designs, as well as preserving cultural practices, local knowledge and ways of life.

Spanish National Archaeology Plan published

Apr: The Spanish Ministry of Culture – working closely with regional governments and a wide range of stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, cultural institutions, and professional associations – has developed the [National Archaeology Plan](#). This pioneering initiative establishes a comprehensive set of good-practice guidelines for the management, conservation, and protection of archaeological and paleontological heritage.

Underwater survey in the Bay of Algeciras reveals 34 shipwrecks

22 Apr: Spanish archaeologists exploring the bay that curves between the southern port of Algeciras and the Rock of Gibraltar have documented the wrecks of more than 30 ships that were wrecked near the Pillars of Hercules between the fifth century BC and the second world war. The discoveries come from the Herakles Project, led by University of Cadiz researchers Felipe Cerezo Andreo and Alicia Arevalo Gonzalez. The project took place 2020- 2023, aiming to expand knowledge of the underwater archaeological sites in the Bay of Algeciras. The team also discovered 151 previously undocumented archaeological sites. [Research paper](#) (Spanish) or [news report](#).

7 Most Endangered Heritage Sites in Europe for 2026

26 Feb: Europa Nostra has released the list of the [7 Most Endangered heritage sites](#) in Europe for 2026, in the frame of its 7 Most Endangered Programme, run with the support of the European Investment Bank (EIB) Institute. This year's list comprises a wide variety of heritage sites which were selected on the basis of their European significance, cultural and social value, as well as the serious danger that they are facing. The level of engagement of local communities and/or the commitment of public and private stakeholders to saving these sites were considered as being of crucial added value. Another selection criterion was the potential of each of the sites to act as a driver of sustainable socioeconomic development. Find the full list here.

ANCHISE project final forum

16 Jan: The [ANCHISE Final Forum](#) was held in Athens, gathering over a hundred participants from across Europe for three days of exchange on the future of cultural heritage protection. ANCHISE's three-year action has produced: a toolkit of six technologies developed through a bottom-up approach with end-users, a body of social sciences research on trafficking networks, and a professional network connecting previously fragmented communities. The forum emphasised that no tool can replace human expertise, but that innovation designed with practitioners can dramatically accelerate operational responses.

Archaeological exhibition “Cyprus and Italy: Shared Cultural Identities at the Dawn of History”

27 Feb: This [exhibition in Rome](#) falls within the Cultural Programme of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU 2026. The exhibition presents, by means of 120 rare archaeological objects, multidimensional stories of the cultural development of Cyprus and the islands of Italy over seven millennia of Mediterranean history, and will be open to the public until 30 June 2026. Beyond the common heritage, the exhibition reflects core EU values and the Cyprus Presidency's cultural vision: to strengthen the Union's internal ties by using culture as a key catalyst for promoting cohesion within the EU and by recognising that culture is the most important expression of our common European identity and the common thread that binds member states together.

[Joint initiative of European Archaeological Council \(EAC\) and European Association of Archaeologists \(EAA\)](#). Prepared by the EAC Assistant Jenni Butterworth. Contact us at: info@e-a-c.org