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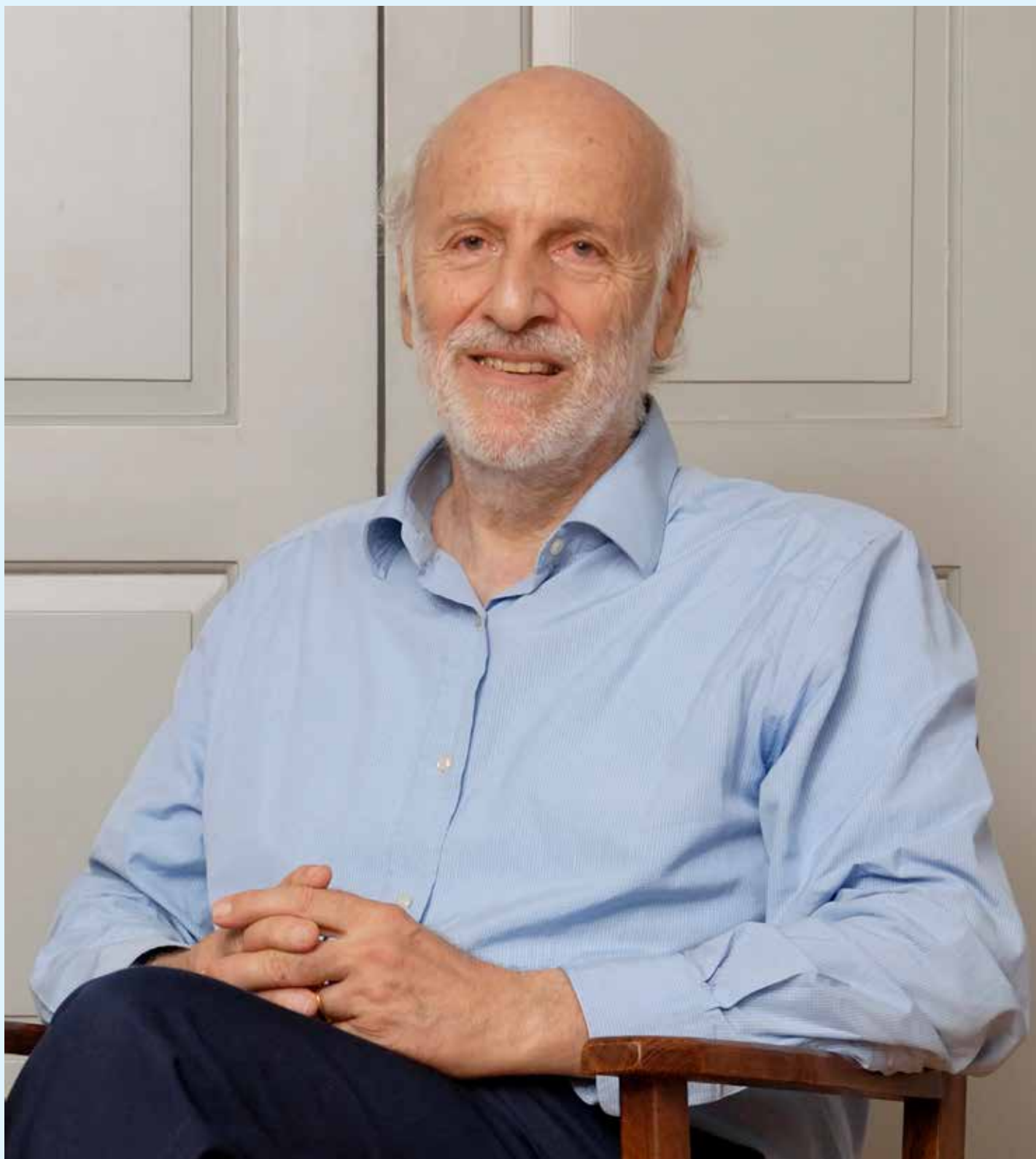
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*In memory of David Sassoli (1956 – 2022),
President of the European Parliament (3 July 2019– 11 January 2022)*

*Focusing on culture and cultural heritage is one of the best and most effective ways of approaching the debate on the future of Europe, our sense of belonging and our identity, because culture and cultural heritage help us to remember who we are, where we come from and where we want to go.**



*In memory of Costa Carras (1938-2022)
Vice-President Europa Nostra (1976-2019)*

Europa Nostra pays tribute and expresses its profound gratitude to the visionary leadership and immense achievements of our long-standing Vice-President Costa Carras who sadly passed away on 28 February 2022. Over a period of 50 years, he had become a legendary champion of the cause of conservation of cultural and natural heritage and landscape in his native country Greece and elsewhere in Europe.

He was especially dedicated to promoting dialogue, peace and reconciliation in the region of South-East Europe as shown in this edition of our Magazine. Europa Nostra and its large network of members and partners across Europe and beyond, remain indebted to his huge legacy, extraordinary erudition and generous support.



North
Sea

Welcome

The past two years turned out to be very different and much more challenging than anyone had expected.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a direct attack on Europe's values of peace, respect of human rights, democracy, rule of law and respect for our shared history and cultural heritage. Please note that all the articles in this magazine were written before the war. For our latest campaigns and actions concerning the war in Ukraine, please go to our websites and social media.

The attack on Ukraine was not the only humanitarian crisis Europe faced in the last two years. The global COVID-19 crisis has had a profound influence on everyone's life and has deeply affected Europe's cultural heritage field. Not only did many of us deal with personal loss, the majority of people working in the cultural heritage sector saw their incomes evaporate and their carefully laid-out plans derailed. The tourist industry, which is so vital to many of our heritage monuments and sites, took a severe blow. Restorations, exhibitions, cultural events and educational projects were postponed. I dare say the emotional consequences were even more profound. The impact of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine made us all feel more vulnerable, more insecure and more uncertain.

As we are now hopefully slowly, step by step, emerging from this challenging and frightening period, many of us realise that we have to build back better; more resilient and sustainable, more beautiful and more inclusive. Europe and the European project has to adapt to the new challenges of the modern era and Europa Nostra is convinced that cultural heritage has an essential role to play. We therefore welcome the two new initiatives of the European Union: the Conference on The Future of Europe and the New European Bauhaus. We are an active partner in both projects and you can read more about the plans and our role in this magazine. Cultural heritage is not just an important part of Europe's future, it's the key to its success.

This feeling of optimism is also the main ingredient of this new Heritage in Action magazine. As Executive President of Europa Nostra, it is a great pleasure for me to introduce this special edition which focuses on South East Europe. I feel very fortunate that I, as an archaeologist, have been able to do research and field work in many of these countries. I have so many fond



memories of the people I worked with and the places I visited. Although we certainly do not close our eyes for the many challenges in the heritage field in South East Europe, we decided early on that we wanted our magazine to send a message of hope, of an intergenerational commitment to forge a better future. Many sites and monuments in this region are under threat of uncontrolled development, bad decisions, lack of regulations and even corruption. Thousands of professionals and volunteers work tirelessly to safeguard our heritage with very little official support. You will discover many surprising stories of dedication and perseverance under difficult circumstances. You will travel from prehistoric times to the modern era, from small wooden churches to large factories, and from enchanting lakes to forgotten villages.

This publication would not have been possible without our dear colleagues and friends from South East Europe. We also wish to acknowledge the vital on-going support of the EU's Creative Europe Programme and our partners the A. G. Leventis Foundation and the Pictet Group. Their support has enabled Europa Nostra to develop its activities on many fronts, including this Magazine.

Hermann Parzinger

Executive President of Europa Nostra



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A Golden Opportunity

A new future for an ancient mining area

Sitting on a mountain top overlooking the Roşia Montană valley, it is hard to imagine that this peaceful, pleasant place has been an apple of discord for decades. Local communities, international mining companies, national and regional authorities, and heritage activists are locked in an epic battle. The ancient mining area in the Transylvanian Apuseni mountains is in a remote part of Romania, far away from the modern world.

At the same time, however, they are very much at the centre of it. The mining landscape of Roşia Montană has become a symbol of a David versus Goliath battle between preservation and destruction. The reason is simple and as old as humanity itself: the greed for gold and profit. For now, the active

mines are closed, but the future remains uncertain.

For millennia, the hills around the valley have provided precious ores for one civilisation after another, going back to prehistoric times. Kilometres of tunnels lie deep under ancient farmlands with their distinctive,

traditional haystacks. On some of the green mountains around the Roşia Montană village you can detect the effects of open cast mining.

Claudia Apostol is an architect from Bucharest and coordinator of the volunteering programme of Adopt a House





Claudia Apostol

Programme (*see below*) of the Association ARA (Architecture. Restoration. Archaeology). Ever since she first became involved with Roşia Montană, the place has never left her heart. Today, she is back in town, together with many professionals and volunteers from across Romania and Europe, to celebrate the European Heritage Days. Many of the activists stay in one of the few restored houses in the centre of the village. The town is buzzing with activities, from a 3-D photographic exhibition to mining excursions and traditional skills workshops.

One of the many village houses in need of restoration



Adopt a House is a cultural heritage and community rescue and protection programme dedicated to Roşia Montană and the neighbouring villages. It is initiated by ARA – Architecture. Restoration. Archaeology which protects and promotes the site's spectacular historic environment through the restoration and enhancement of built heritage in partnership with the local owners.

Adopt a House received the prestigious Romanian Prize For Innovative Solutions In Promoting Cultural Heritage National Cultural Fund (AFCN) Awards Gala, and was recently nominated for the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award, as a recognition of the value of cultural heritage action for fashioning our present day living environment.

A panoramic view of the Roşia Montană valley



Costa Carras (1938-2022), former Vice President of Europa Nostra and European cultural heritage legend, saw the protection of Roșia Montană as one of the most satisfying moments of his long and esteemed heritage career.

“I’ve had many, many satisfactions in working for cultural heritage. Many. However, one of the greatest satisfactions I ever got was Roșia Montană. And those of us who were committed environmentalists were absolutely adamant: Roșia Montană is both culturally and environmentally an utter disaster. Romania is par excellence a country, which should have given priority to its cultural heritage. I remember saying you have to decide when you fight a battle, whether it’s going to be a Thermopylae or a Marathon. Marathon are battles that you have to win. There’s nothing else to do. Thermopylae are battles where you know you’re going to lose, but you have to fight as a matter of honour. So I said, wrongly, that Roșia Montană is a Thermopylae. We have to fight as a matter of honor, but we are going to lose. But we did not lose. And that gives deep satisfaction. I still remember all those people marching through the streets in Bucharest. I said, ‘this is fantastic, the ordinary people demonstrating in the streets. They’re saying we won’t have this.’ That was a deep satisfaction that something which you thought was a lost cause was one that could be won.”

The town square of the village of Roșia Montană





Casa Bocaniciu during restoration



The town square of the village of Roșia Montană with houses covered in canvas

Apostol is very happy with the newly constructed smithy built on an old foundation on the town's outskirts. There, French blacksmiths are demonstrating their skills using traditional tools. It is an emotional reunion with many of the young volunteers. The atmosphere is festive and friendly, a far cry from the first missions to the valley she remembers so well. "We were met with a lot of hostility. We even had to call the police

when the cronies of the mining company had us completely surrounded. They did not want us here. They were not interested in our ideas. The mayor and the local community looked at us with suspicion. Many were afraid that we were threatening their livelihoods. In reality, we were trying to save their way of life. Even a restoration initiated by the Romanian boy scouts, who bought half of the Casa Bocaniciu, a 19th-century dilapidated villa right on the



Building a traditional smithy with international volunteers

French blacksmiths demonstrating their skills

town square, was questioned. As if the boy scouts had bad intentions! We were thinking of long term solutions while the people who were dependent on the mines were worried about today and tomorrow. That is understandable, and we had to convince the local community that there is a sustainable future for Roşia Montană without the mines. The heritage experts all understand the enormous tourism potential but have to take it a day at a time. We are now 10, 15 years actively involved, and there are still many hurdles to take.”

At the surface, the tensions seem to have diminished over



the last decade. The company no longer sends goons to scare off the heritage activists. In 2013, Roşia Montană was selected for the first 7 Most Endangered list, an initiative of Europa Nostra in cooperation with the European Investment Bank Institute to find sustainable solutions for threatened heritage. In 2016, it was put on the country’s tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage status. However, the procedure to make it official was postponed time and time again, sometimes on dubious grounds. On 27 July 2021, during the 44th extended session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the Rosia Montana mining landscape was inscribed



simultaneously on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger. After so many years of cat-and-mouse games, the future of Roşia Montană is looking a lot brighter.

In town, however, trouble is still brewing. If one takes a closer look, it is very noticeable how many of the houses are in bad shape or covered



Entrance to one of the mines

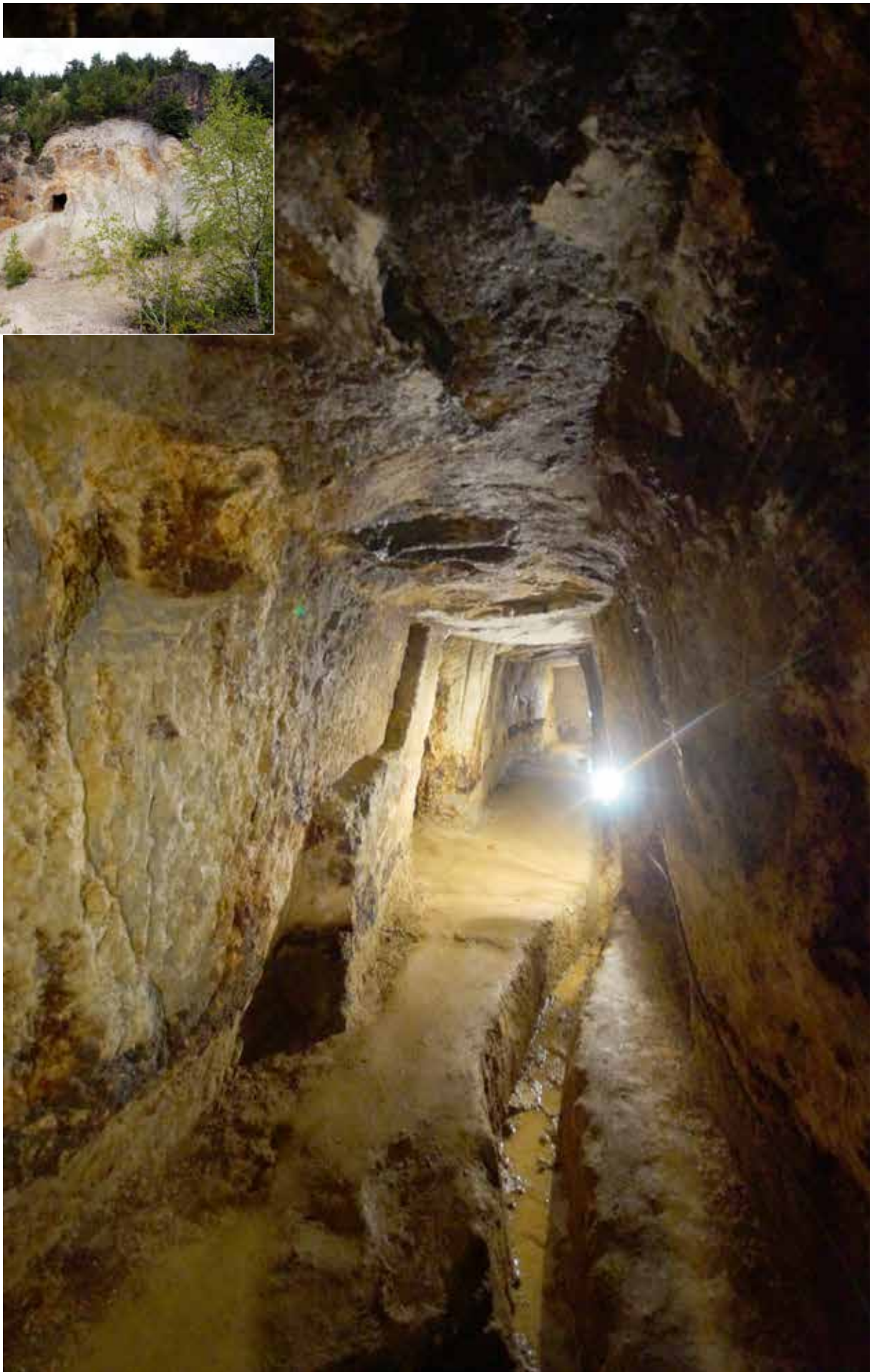
with large canvas prints to hide their scarred facades. The old Calvinist church is fenced off. There is no longer a congregation to maintain the building. Behind the scenes, the mining company is still pulling strings. Apostol explains: *“The company has bought 80% of the village properties and the depopulation causes large problems. Many traditional houses now stand empty and are falling apart or are restored too cheaply. We have started an initiative in which people can adopt a village house to save as much as possible (see below). Local rules also stop people from opening shops or restaurants, so new initiatives are stifled. I*



The Calvinist church then and now



Inside one of the
mine shafts
Roman mine



believe the Canadian mining company was never seriously considering bringing the gold extraction industry back. They are trying to hold on for as long as possible to sell their license to the highest bidder. Reopening the mines would be disastrous for the region. So much has already been destroyed.”

Undoubtedly new gold mining would bring cyanide pollution and deforestation. However, to transform the area into a thriving tourist destination is not possible overnight. Apostol is confident the long-term future looks bright, but they need time, investments, and international help. *“The local population has minimal experience in how to treat tourists. We need schooling and training. Many new industries could be developed, but the roads that lead here are*



badly maintained. There is so much to discover in the Roşia Montană region, but many locations need to be improved and restored before they are suitable and safe for tourists. The local mining museum, for instance, has great potential, but it is a fire hazard in its present condition. It is run by volunteers,

ex-employees of the mines, but when you want to welcome international groups, the visitor’s experience has to be improved.”

One site which is very special to Apostol is the house of the last remaining blacksmith, halfway up one of the green hills surrounding the village. *“It is*

The deserted house of the local blacksmith with an outhouse to ‘shoe’ oxen.

One of the many lakes that surround the village



Dilapidated buildings around the mining sites



an extraordinary place which the blacksmith had built himself. This strange-looking outhouse is really unique and one of those extraordinary buildings you can find in Roşia Montană. It is made to 'shoe' oxen. Every blacksmith knows how to 'shoe' a horse, but to 'shoe' an ox is something else. Horses are docile and understand what is going on. Oxen do not understand it at all. They are not cooperating. You have to lock them in from all sides and lift them up, and they are much, much stronger than a horse. It is just one of the many special places you can discover in this region. You can see the ancient Roman mines across the valley, there are historic reservoirs and lakes, and beautiful traditional farmhouses."

One of the supporters of a new and bright future for Roşia Montană is the Greek-Catholic



Church. When Apostol first came to the valley, the church was not interested in their plans, but the new, young Father Georgel has welcomed the heritage enthusiasts into his parish. The old home of the priest will be transformed into a visitor's centre. He is organising a barbecue for all the visitors for the European Heritage Days,

blessed with traditional music and local recipes.

The long, challenging journey of Roşia Montană is far from over. For now, the gold-digging seems to have been replaced by golden opportunities: a heritage-led regeneration that will enrich both the local communities and international visitors.

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Trouble in Paradise



Map of Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa

It is a catch-22 situation. Lake Ohrid is undoubtedly one of Europe's hidden treasures, on the border between Albania and North Macedonia, not far from Greece.



Lake Ohrid (photo by Diego Delso)

The UNESCO listed site is a unique historic-cultural region located in a natural setting of exceptional beauty. The area understandably welcomes tourists from across Europe, and the region's economy is mostly dependent on it.

However, its extraordinary location, between two countries who are both not part of European Union, is also a magnet for ambitious business people, populist politicians, ignorant construction companies and unscrupulous investors who are tempted to destroy the cultural and natural heritage for short term gains. The local communities living around Lake Ohrid in its historic

towns and villages are caught between a rock and a hard place. They want to preserve their ancestral home, but they also really need the income.

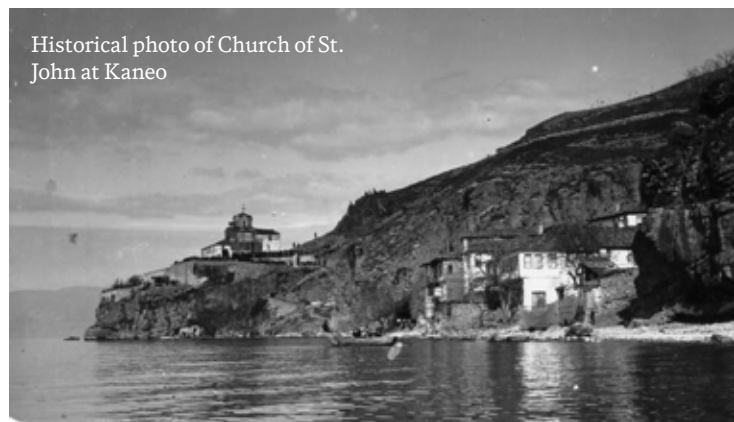
It is not easy to overstate the uniqueness of the region. Ohrid is one of the oldest freshwater lakes, in existence for more than two million years. Over the millennia, civilisations rose and fell along its shores; from Neolithic cultures to the Roman Empire, from the Byzantines to the Ottomans. The result is a vibrant melting pot of natural and cultural heritage, not just worthy of protection but a true symbol of Europe's multi-layered history. With important archaeological sites,

rare endemic species, delicate shorelines with their traditional reed belts, lush mountain forests, more than 2,500 square metres of frescoes in churches and monasteries and the intangible heritage of the small village communities: Lake Ohrid is a treasure trove.

Inscription of the almost 95.000 ha Lake Ohrid region onto the World Heritage list began in 1979, first, for its natural beauty, then, expanded a year later to include its cultural heritage values. The Republic of Yugoslavia (1945–1992) was convinced that its protection would benefit the local population, increase tourism and develop the region. In



Church of St. John at Kaneo
(photo by Amazone7)



Historical photo of Church of St. John at Kaneo

2014, the area was further expanded as the Ohrid-Prespa Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, and by 2019, it also included the Albanian side. However, the delicate balance between economic progress and preserving the fragile natural and cultural heritage has increasingly become untenable.

The lake has three larger settlements; Struga and Ohrid on the Macedonian side and Pogradec on the Albanian side. The historic towns and small fishing villages in between have been invaded by newly built resorts and hotels, activity centres and shops. Highways and byways are being constructed to improve



Ohrid Town (photo by Niki Gango)

Giant boulder
in Lake Ohrid
(photo by
SilfirieI)



the infrastructure. Artificial beaches have been created to accommodate western tourists. Low-cost airlines are increasingly eyeing the potential of the region.

Increased population and visitor numbers have also put pressure on the natural resilience of the lake's ecosystem which can no longer cope with the increased raw sewage, waste and pollution. Traditionally, Lake Ohrid's waters are extremely clear. The

springs which feed the lake are filtered through the marshlands and the mountain rocks, bringing just enough nutrients and minimal sandy soil into the waters. Now, the increased contamination encourages algae and other unwanted guests to literally cloud the once pristine waters.

The situation around Lake Ohrid does not stand on its own. The larger UNESCO-listed area is also affected. Between

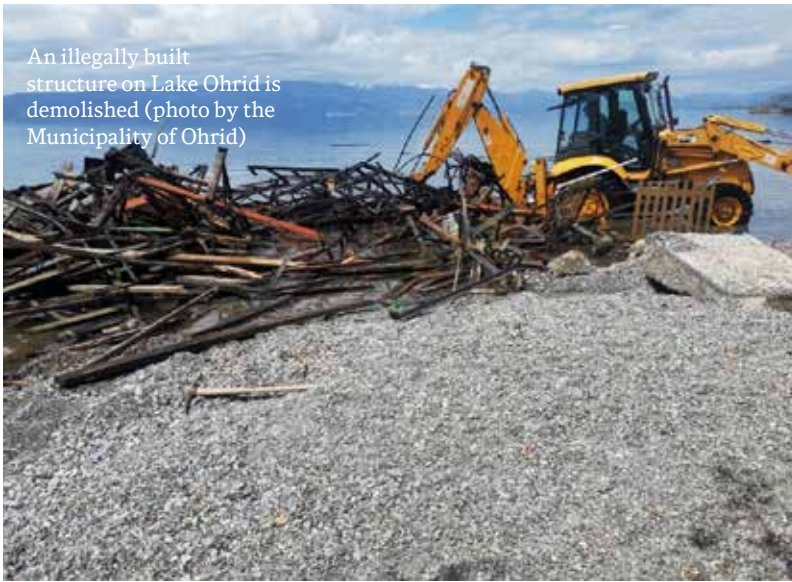
Lake Ohrid and the other natural treasure of the region, Lake Prespa, lie the Galičica mountains, a wild, green ocean interspersed with imposing grey peaks. Wolves, bears and even the Balkan lynx roam the forests of this National Park, filled with unique flora and fauna. There is an underground connection between Ohrid and Prespa and what happens to one lake also happens to the other.

Today, however, the area is in danger of increased urbanisation, with a ski centre, new roads and so-called tourist development zones. The planned expressway, part-financed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), was scrutinised for vandalising natural habitats. After international pressure, the North Macedonian government redirected the EBRD funds to other projects. On top of all these ecological threats, climate change will add another

Lake Prespa (photo by
Angeliki Argyriadou)



An illegally built structure on Lake Ohrid is demolished (photo by the Municipality of Ohrid)



layer of potential disaster. The cumulative impact of all these different threats over a long period is decidedly underestimated. Recently, the new North Macedonian leaders have been stepping up efforts to preserve the region.

Local NGOs, which have for many years been rowing against the tide to safeguard the lake's unique heritage, keep a keen eye on the situation. Ohrid SOS, for instance, is very

active on social media using the hashtag #SaveLakeOhrid to draw attention to the many threats. The organisation finds itself supported by many others engaged in the field of preservation, including Europe Nostra. Europa Nostra actively monitors the situation and is hopeful for the future. The new government takes a keen interest in preserving the region's natural and cultural heritage. The tranquil paradise may no longer be in serious trouble.

TRADITIONAL WATERMILL IN AGIOS GERMANOS

European Heritage Award winner 2016 in the category Conservation

Not far from Lake Ohrid, in the mountainous region of the National Park of Prespa, the local community works on reviving its cultural and industrial heritage. The restoration of a traditional watermill in the small town of Agia Germanos stands as a symbol for the region's shared heritage. The mill, one of twenty in the region, is a point of shared cultural values in the area between Greece, Albania and North Macedonia. *"This project sets a wonderful example for other similar sites in this beautiful region. Its social impact, as well as the preservation of this fine example of industrial heritage, is worthy of the highest merit,"* the jury noted.

Agios Mill (photo by Aggeliki Georganta)



The mill was originally constructed in 1930. The restoration involved repairing the building, which was in a critical condition, reconstructing the destroyed mechanical systems, and rebuilding the water supply system and making the site more easily accessible to visitors.

Now it is once again in full working order. It has three different mechanisms: one which grinds flour, another for cleaning fabrics and the third for textile finishing. The community actively supports this project and local villagers volunteer their time to the watermill's daily operation.

The mill is a 'living monument,' a classic example of the region's industrial heritage. The project inspired much-needed cross-border collaboration, contributing to a culture of reconciliation and good neighbourliness.



Lake Prespa (photo by Chrysa Papadopoulou)



Brutal Legacy

Sculpting and moulding concrete in new and exciting ways was one of French-Swiss architect Le Corbusier's passions. His vision would be reinterpreted into what would become known as Brutalism, from the French *béton brut*: the rough use of concrete in architecture with little or no excess decoration.

* The Central Post Office's nomination to the 7 Most Endangered programme 2021 was submitted by the Institute for Research in Environment, Civil Engineering and Energy (IECE). The state-owned joint-stock company supports it for postal traffic 'POST of North Macedonia'-Skopje, the Ministry of Culture of North Macedonia, Fraunhofer IBP, and the consultant Dr. Georgi Georgiev, both based in Germany.

Brutalism quickly conquered the world and brought us some of the most disliked council estates and office buildings in existence. From the 1950s, behemoths made of endless rows of modular apartments and offices in grey, monotonous forms invaded our cities and suburbs. The structures were supposed to capture a bright, new future in which humanity's ambitions harmoniously blended with modern design. The buildings

would not look out of place on another planet or in another time, reflecting the optimism of the period. However, the people living and working in them usually did not share the positive sentiment. Almost as quickly as they had become fashionable, Brutalist buildings were remodelled, abandoned, or demolished.

It seems that the enchantment of the Brutalist style was

nowhere as strong and long-lasting as in South East Europe. The larger-than-life designs were concrete evidence of the establishment of a new, modern society guided by communist principles. Times, however, have changed after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The impressive marvels that once were symbols of the advancement of the masses now look soulless and strangely out of place in a world that has moved on.

The roof of the central building



The Post Office (photo by Dominik Tefert)

The Post Office (detail, photo by Dan))



Although most of the Brutalist creations have indeed lost their appeal, some have managed to find a place in the hearts of local communities. They rise above the bleak concrete jungle of the former communist cities and reveal beauty and meaning worthy of preserving. It is only logical that some of these extraordinary buildings would end up on the 7 Most Endangered list of Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute.

THE CENTRAL POST OFFICE IN SKOPJE

The Central Post Office in Skopje in North Macedonia* is one of the most striking examples of 'good' Brutalism from South East Europe. It was built after the earthquake of



Interior in better days

1963 and encapsulated the city's resilience after such a disaster. The concrete seems to grow from the earth and spreads

its lotus-like leaves longingly towards the sky. It was designed by North Macedonian architect and artist Janko Konstantinov

Interior today (photos by Blagica Stojcevska)



and completed in 1974 when the country was still part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The sculptural and aesthetic qualities made the building an immediate international design success. The Counter Hall for the Telecommunications and Postal Centre, as it was then known, combined daring architecture with murals by the interior designer Borko Lazeski and custom-made furniture, lamps, and ornaments.

In 2013, the building was all but destroyed by a massive fire. Walking around the Central Post Office today is a sad affair. Rising groundwater of the nearby Vardar river slowly eats

away at its foundation. The original glazing of its impressive dome is disintegrating, the roof is all but gone, and the interior is a derelict mess. The clock is ticking. The building, which was such a poignant symbol of resurrection, is deteriorating at an alarming pace, and its future seems uncertain.

Now, as one of the European sites selected for the 2021 7 Most Endangered list, the tide is slowly turning. The conservation is extraordinarily complex, but hope has returned. The local communities and government are becoming more involved. The plans to change the building into a centre for cultural and social

activities focusing on local and international audiences are gaining traction. Still, there is a lot of work to be done. The massive, crumbling structure first needs to be stabilised. The glazed dome, the wall paintings and other interior elements need to be restored from scratch. The rooms need to be made suitable and safe for cultural events and large audiences. Graham Bell, board member of Europa Nostra and member of the Advisory Panel, sums up the challenges which face the reconstruction efforts: *“The Central Post Office is one of the strongest landmarks in Skopje, a lotus flower floating on the Vardar river, which embodies earth-spiritual influences in*



architecture, from Alvar Aalto in Scandinavia to Japan's Kenzō Tange. Unfortunately, the flower is withering from neglect. A stirring heart in Germany has rallied support to save it. This symbol of national resilience, portrayed upon a European canvas, is cultural significance at its purest and most fragile."

THE BUZLUDZHA MONUMENT

Five hundred kilometres to the east of Skopje lies another Brutalist treasure with a much more chequered history. In Bulgaria, the Buzludzha Monument, built 40 years ago, was listed among the 7 Most Endangered heritage sites in

Europe in 2018. The long and winding forest road leading up to the monument reveals its unique position, high above the surrounding plains. It was designed as a symbol to commemorate the foundation of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers Party. On top of the mountain, the whole world lay literally at its feet. It took architect Georgi Stoilov and more than 6,000 engineers, artists, designers, sculptors, volunteer labourers, and soldiers seven years to construct this iconic landmark. The result was an engineering feat of epic proportions: a slender rectangular tower, adorned with a one of the world's largest

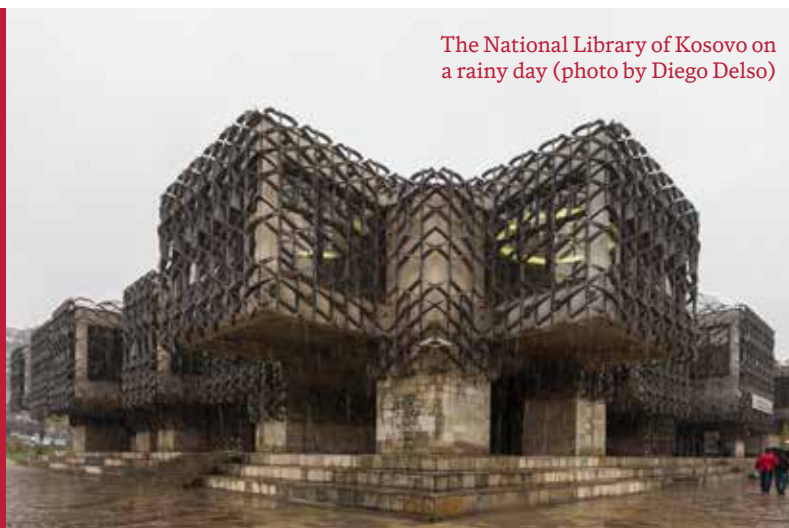
red stars next to a gravity-defying main structure with Cyrillic writing. It looked like a 1950s flying saucer had quietly touched down on a mountaintop.

In the end, Bulgaria's most ambitious architectural achievement was only in use for eight years. The communist government fell in 1989, and the Buzludzha Monument became a symbol of a failed, repressive regime. Now, its roof is damaged, and it rains and snows in the main auditorium. The fragile mosaics are falling apart. The harsh weather conditions are slowly disintegrating the curved concrete walls. One cannot walk through the

The exterior
(photo
by Nicola
Miller)

The
Monument in
the winter

The National Library of Kosovo in Prishtina was completed in 1982. It was designed by the Croatian architect Andrija Mutnjaković. He created a combination of domes and boxes covered with delicate ironwork, in what he perceived as a unifying nod to Byzantine and Ottoman architecture. However, not everybody agreed, and the library suffered greatly during the Yugoslav Wars when many of its Albanian books were actively destroyed and pulped.



The National Library of Kosovo on a rainy day (photo by Diego Delso)



The interior during the 2018 mission by the European Investment Bank Institute and Europa Nostra. Board Member Graham Bell monitors the situation closely and is a trustee of the Buzludzha Project Foundation (photo by Nicola Miller)

Three photographs of the original interior



draughty corridors with the crumbling artworks without a deep feeling of loss.

The Buzludzha Project has been trying to save the building and give it a new future. The spectacular location offers excellent opportunities for



cultural, touristic, and socio-economic activities. Since Europa Nostra recognised the monument as one of the 7 Most Endangered sites in Europe, things started to move more quickly and many steps have been taken in the right direction. European



specialists in cultural heritage and finance visited the site. They met with representatives from the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Culture, and the Stara Zagora region administration. One of the most important recommendations was that the restoration of



The Pyramid of Tirana was built as a museum to celebrate the memory of Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha. It opened its doors in 1988 and was even co-designed by his daughter Pravera. It is an extraordinary example of Brutalist architecture with a troubled legacy. By 1991, the Stalinist dictator's reputation was in tatters, communism was on its way out, and the Pyramid became a convention centre, a nightclub,

and a temporary base for NATO. By 2017, only a shadow of the original building was left, with crumbling facades, broken windows and sad layers of graffiti. Recently, the famous Dutch architectural company MVRDV has been engaged by the Albanian-American Development Foundation to develop plans to revitalise the Pyramid of Tirana.

the monument should not be made subject to political controversies. Firstly, the site will be designated a Cultural Heritage Monument of National Interest by the Ministry of Culture, which is not as easy as it sounds. Secondly, before Buzludzha can be restored, the building has to be made safe. It should be made as weather-proof as possible to ensure no further damage can occur. The future plans must include architectural scanning, technical studies, a business and risk analysis, a project implementation timeline and environmental impact assessment. Partnerships with, for instance, ICOMOS Germany

and a range of experts from across the region and beyond are key to future success.

Furthermore, any project should include the whole surrounding area of the National Park Museum Shipka-Buzludzha. Investments could come from the European Regional Development Fund or the Cohesion Fund. The project has now received two Getty Foundation 'Keep it Modern' grants. It was impossible to make the whole structure weathertight so the funding has enabled the building to be laser scanned, the inner mosaics to be recorded and

stabilised and cocooned in a protective enclosure. The building has been cleared of the asphyxiating disintegrating roof insulation (although it will return at some moment in the future), and webcams have been installed to enable monitoring of the structure's condition and (increasing) visitor numbers.

One of Bulgaria's most iconic landmarks has taken its first, important steps towards a better future.



Sculptures in front of the original excavation site (photo by Željko Filipin)

The Krapina Neanderthal Museum (photo by Željko Filipin)

Entrance to the village of Krapina (photo by Sandór Bordás)



Early Europeans

Who could have predicted that the actions of some of our early ancestors a hundred thousand years or so ago would still have repercussions today? When homo sapiens started to conquer Europe, they quickly realised they were not the first to do so.

Small groups of Neanderthals had been roaming the continent for millennia. We will probably never know what precisely happened between the two humanoid species, but their DNA is still with us today. Hundreds of millions of Europeans have up to 2% of genetic material that can be traced back directly to their Neanderthal ancestors. People with these specific genes may have a higher threshold for pain or bear more children. A study from the United Kingdom found these genes boost the odds that a person smokes, is an evening person rather than a morning person, or is prone to sunburn and depression. And, in September 2020, the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden concluded that the chances of COVID-19 complications increased if you carry a specific Neanderthal gene. It goes to show that, although they became extinct tens of thousands of years ago, the Neanderthals' legacy lives on in us.

The gene variation used in the above scientific studies is the same as that of a Neanderthal discovered in Croatia, which comes as no surprise. After all, South East Europe has some of the oldest and best-preserved Neanderthal sites in Europe. One of the richest excavation sites is now home to the Krapina Neanderthal Museum, a well-designed modern museum, cleverly integrated into its natural surroundings. The Museum exhibitions take the visitors on a journey through time and space and tell the story of the universe, earth, and man. The museum works towards



Neanderthal
necklace, made of
bird claws (photo
by Luka Mjeda)

making its natural environment mimic the Neanderthal world. The location, Hušnjak Hill in the village of Krapina, is an extraordinary place, nestled between the inviting, fertile slopes of northwest Croatia close to the Slovenian border. What happened here 125,000 years ago is still a mystery, but the largest number of Neanderthal fossil bones in Europe (900 human remains from about eighty individuals) was discovered on this hill as well as bones of deer, wolves, buffalos, cave bears, and elks.

The remarkable site at Krapina was discovered by Croatian geologist and paleontologist Dragutin Gorjanović-Kramberger in 1899. His

analysis and interpretation of the fossil remains proved essential for understanding early Europeans and helped build the foundation of the theory of human evolution. How did they live and survive in Europe long before their cousins the Homo Sapiens showed up? How were their communities organised? Although Gorjanović-Kramberger viewed our closest relatives as relatively primitive and ape-like, his dedicated and detailed work inspired generations of scientists.

The Neanderthals have come a long way in the last century. Initially seen as grunting halfwits, modern scientists view them as capable and complex

Sculptures,
representing
more traditional
views of
Neanderthals
(photo by Željko
Filipin)



Diorama at the
new museum
(photo by Luka
Mjeda)



survivors. Neanderthals made Europe their home under challenging conditions for at least 250,000 years. In comparison, modern humans

only arrived on the continent 40,000 years ago. Over the years, new insights made the Neanderthals lose their ape-like faces and turned them

into prolific tool makers, skilled hunters, and competent artists. All these discoveries led to a more accurate depiction of these distant ancestors. Their appearance became more lifelike and humanoid. Inside the Krapina museum, we find excellent examples of these 'new' Neanderthal reconstructions. The old ape-like creatures have not entirely disappeared from the museum and can be found outside, along the forest path that leads to Kramberger's original excavation site. However, the caves at the site look very different today than they did when they were first excavated at the beginning of the 20th century due to the partial collapse of the vulnerable sandstone rocks in the 1960s.

Goranka Horjan, now the Director of Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb*, was instrumental in establishing the new museum. She recalls the complexity of the challenge. *"The museum had stepped away from the cooperative in which several museums in this region worked together. They had decided to go at it alone. But the work on the new museum was challenging, and it even stopped completely for several years. When I took over the responsibility, my first task was to bring the museum back into our cooperation. It still took eleven years to complete the construction of the new museum. The original calculations were all wrong, and there were many tensions between the architects and scientists. The land was owned by the Krapina municipality*

and the surrounding forest by the Croatian government, which complicated the issue. We had to convince the local community that this time we would continue and finish the project. All in all, it was not easy, but on February 27, 2010, the new Krapina Neanderthal Museum opened its doors. It was a great success for everybody involved.”

In 2015, the museum received a European Heritage Label, a European Union recognition of its importance for Europe’s history. Goranka Horjan: “The European Heritage Label is very positive for the museum. It is a recognition of its value for Europe and all Europeans. This recognition is also important for the local community in a broader, economic sense. Krapina is well-located along a major highway, and the museum can boost the local spa industry, the restaurants, the hotels, and the other cultural sites in the same region. We are also working to connect all the prehistoric sites in Croatia. And like I said, the Neanderthal site is part of a collective of museums in the Krapina-Zagorje County,

including Veliki Tabor Castle in Desinić, Antun Augustinčić Gallery in Klanjec, the Old Village Museum in Kumrovec, and the Peasants’ Revolt Museum in Gornja Stubica.”

“Right from the beginning, when we started working on the new museum, we also wanted to work internationally. We partnered in a European project with other Neanderthal sites in Europe to strengthen our position. We wanted to work towards a collective UNESCO World Heritage listing for all European Neanderthal sites, but the timing was not right then. The Gorham’s Cave Complex in Gibraltar did go ahead and was recognised by UNESCO.”

A few years later, the timing was right, and in 2013, three years after the new museum had opened, renewed international cooperation took flight with the Ice Age Europe - Network of Heritage Sites. As a new umbrella network, it promotes close collaboration, solves shared challenges, and actively works towards a collective UNESCO World Heritage listing.

Goranka Horjan: “The Krapina site is such a great site. It still poses many questions we have to



Detail of a Neanderthal woman and child (photo by Luka Mjeda)

answer. To give you an example, it is strange that almost all of the bodies are from women and children with very few men. Was Krapina a burial site or the site of a horrible massacre? There are so many things we do not know yet about the Neanderthals.”



The Thinker (photo by San Lie)

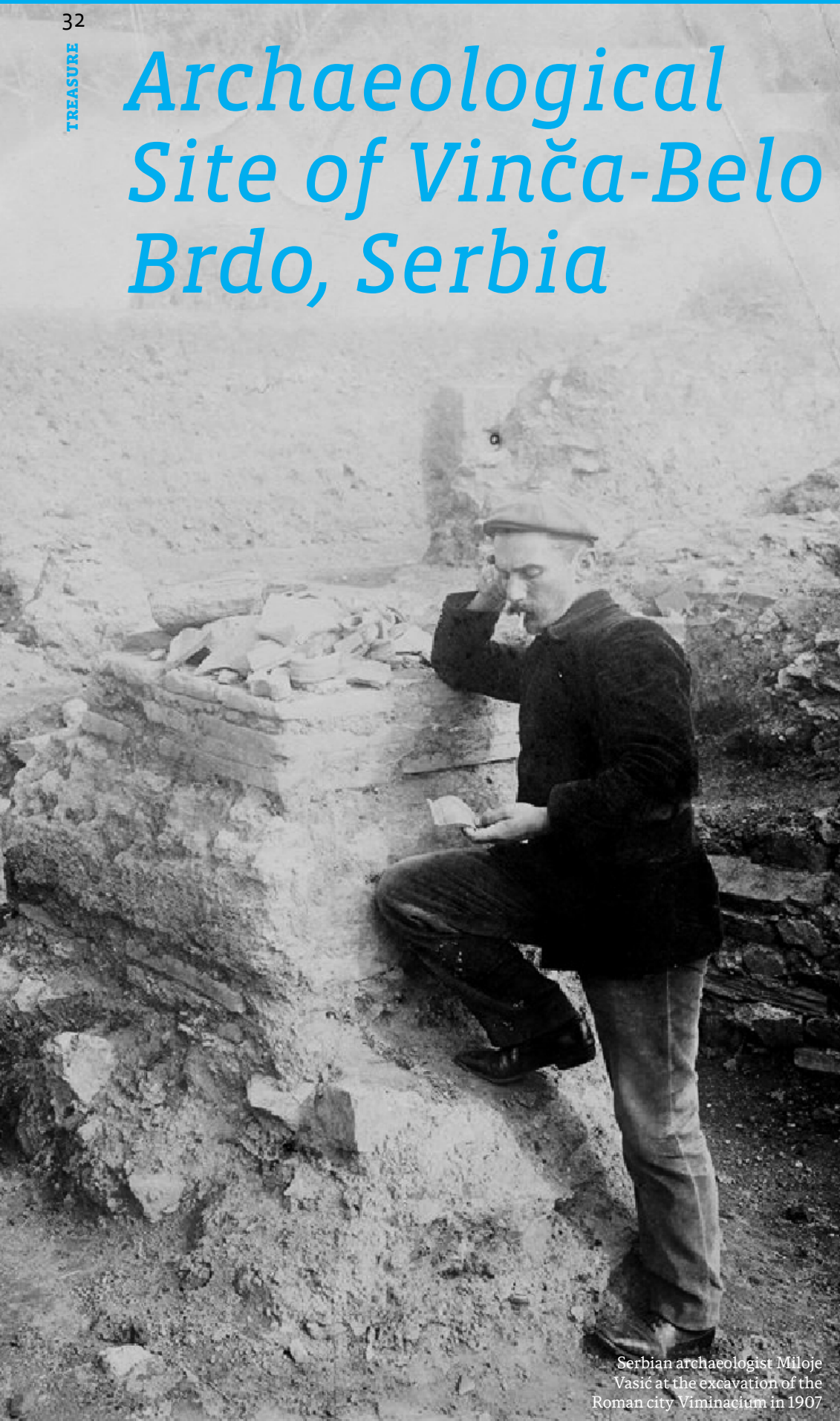
Hamangia culture

The ‘Thinker’ is one of the most famous prehistoric works of art from South East Europe. The roughly 7,000 years’ old figurine of a man sitting on a small stool with his head in his hands was discovered at a necropolis near Cernavoda, Romania. In the same find, a feminine statuette was discovered of similar dimensions and quality. They are both surprisingly expressive examples of the Hamangia culture, which can be placed along the Romanian Black Sea coastline. The statuettes can both be seen in the National History Museum of Romania in Bucharest.

* Goranka Horjan is also European Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards Jury Chairman in the category Education, Training and Awareness-Raising.

Krapina Neanderthal Museum: mkn.mhz.hr

Archaeological Site of Vinča-Belo Brdo, Serbia

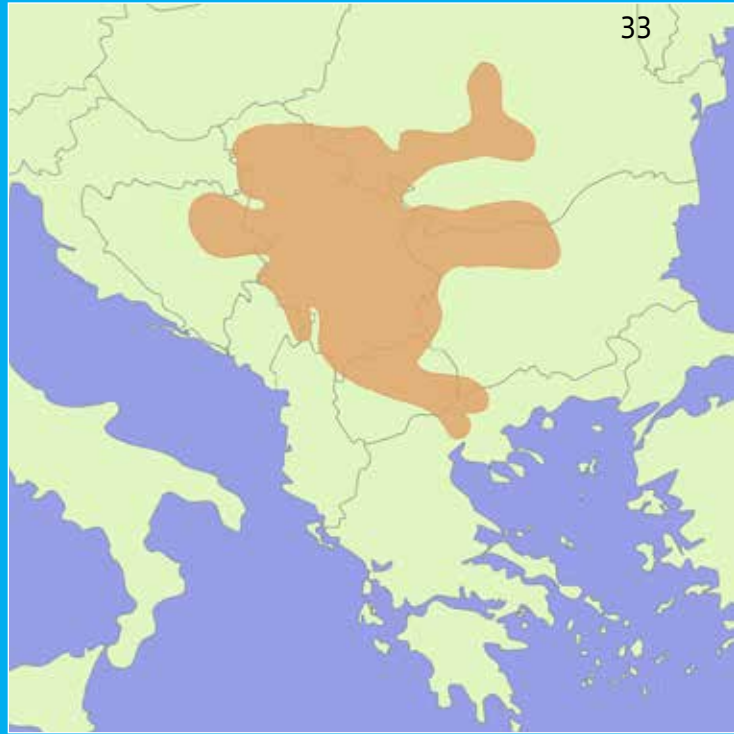


Serbian archaeologist Miloje Vasić at the excavation of the Roman city Viminacium in 1907

Early farmer communities that settled in the vast countryside of South East Europe in the 6th millennium BC faced significant challenges in adapting their plant and animal husbandry from a Mediterranean climate to continental conditions. These pioneers created civilisations Europe had never seen before that came to shape human destiny. South East Europe is a treasure trove of archaeological finds and discoveries.

The Vinča culture probably lasted more than a thousand years. From the 6th to the 5th millennium BC, this neolithic and eneolithic civilisation in the Balkans was one of the largest of its day, casting its influence on large parts of South East Europe and the Mediterranean.

Hermann Parzinger, Executive President of Europa Nostra, has worked for many years on the Vinča culture and especially the dating of its pottery. In an exclusive interview, Parzinger stated: “*Vinča-Belo Brdo is one of the first neolithic sites which was extensively excavated and then published in four substantial volumes at the beginning of the 20th century. The research in Vinča changed our view on the*



neolithic life of early farmers in Europe fundamentally. Vinča is at a crossroads because its material culture closely connects to the south, including the Aegean world. At the same time, Vinča culture played a crucial role in the emergence of sedentary life and the first farmers in Central Europe. Vinča is an archaeological culture of real European importance and dimension, and its main site Vinča-Belo Brdo became emblematic for early farming communities in Southeastern Europe.”

Miloje Vasić, Serbia’s first officially trained archaeologist, discovered Vinča-Belo Brdo in 1905 and started excavating the site in 1908. It is located on the right bank of the Danube River to the southeast of Belgrade. It is a strategic setting, at a crossroads of waterways and roads. For its time, the town was large, with up to 2,500 inhabitants. The settlement traded goods all over the region and beyond. The excavations brought to light tools, ceramic dishes, vases, precious jewels, and



Vinča clay figure (photo by Michel Wal)

figurines of men, women, and animals. To our modern eyes, these figurines seem to reflect serenity and artistic expression.

Despite the European significance of Vinča-Belo Brdo,

the site is under threat. In 2013, Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute shortlisted Vinča-Belo for the 7 Most Endangered sites in Europe. The prehistoric site is highly threatened by the structural lack of funds and proximity to the Danube riverbank. The site’s infrastructure needs to be improved to allow the continuation of scholarly excavations, access for tourists, and enhanced interaction with the local community. Since its inclusion on the 7 Most Endangered list, the Serbian authorities are prioritising finding solutions to the threats to the site. Europa Nostra was invited to share its expertise to implement the measures successfully.

The nomination for ‘The 7 Most Endangered’ was made by the NGO Association for Preserving and Fostering of Vinča’s Pre-Neolithic Culture.

mgb.org.rs/posetite/arheolosko-nalaziste-u-vinci

The archaeological site of Vinča-Belo Brdo, Serbia

The Vinča culture in the Balkans (map by Joe Roe)

Building Back Better

For the first time, the European Institutions have launched two major initiatives largely based on the participation of citizens, namely the Conference on the Future of Europe and the New European Bauhaus. These large-scale projects will help shape a future after the pandemic. The role of cultural heritage in these ‘building back better’ initiatives is essential, especially in South East Europe.

CALLING FOR CITIZENS DEBATES
ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE IN HERITAGE SITES

POWERED BY
#EUROPA
NOSTRA
AGORA

#NewEuropeanBauhaus #COFOE #TheFutureIsYours #Heritage4Europe #EuropeForCulture

Conference on the Future of Europe
New European Bauhaus
beautiful sustainable together

EUROPA NOSTRA

EUROPEAN HERITAGE ALLIANCE 3.3

Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

The campaign to organise debates on the future of Europe in heritage sites across Europe, as published by the Europa Nostra Agora

THE CONFERENCE OF THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

The Conference on the Future of Europe allows European citizens the opportunity to speak up, debate, discuss and share their vision for the future of Europe and to help shape it and co-create it.

On the occasion of 9 May, Europe Day, Europa Nostra – in association with other 50 member organisations of the European Heritage Alliance, which celebrates this year its

10th anniversary – launched a new and inspiring idea, directly connected to the Conference. Why not organise these public debates and discussions in cultural heritage sites, to directly connect our heritage with the Future of Europe.

This grassroots initiative will include sites that have received a European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award or a European Heritage Label. To maximise the impact of these debates and discussions, their

outcomes will be collected and shared on the relevant platforms of the Europa Nostra Agora, the Conference on the Future of Europe and the New European Bauhaus.

Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, Secretary General of Europa Nostra: “*At the time when Europe and the world are preparing their recovery from the pandemic, let us recall the powerful message released by our European Heritage Alliance, exactly one year ago, on Europe*

Day 2020: Europe's shared cultural heritage is a powerful catalyst for the future of Europe. As Europe's citizens are invited to contribute to the Conference on the Future of Europe, we wish to mobilise Europe's vast heritage movement and community to take an active part in this citizen-driven process."

Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Democracy and Demography, who is also Co-Chair of the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe, shared her support for the initiative: "Europe's democracies are built on our rich and diverse cultural heritage. Our historical and cultural sites teach us about our common history, remind us of our past dreams and aspirations, of our humanity and creativity. It is all too natural that we debate and discuss our present and future in these magical sites and shape the heritage for Europe's generations to come."

Mariya Gabriel, EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, also shared her message of endorsement: "Cultural heritage is at the heart of our EU project. It is Europe's soul and values. It belongs to all of us and is a great source of unique and creative jobs that show the richness of Europe. I believe that Europa Nostra's call to mobilize European citizens in inspiring debates on the future of Europe in cultural heritage sites will contribute to our EU initiatives – the Conference on the Future of Europe and the New European Bauhaus -, thus coming up with innovative solutions for building



Video messages published on 9 May in support of organising the debates on the Future of Europe in heritage sites across Europe were recorded by:

1. Pilar Bahamonde, President of Future for Religious Heritage;
2. Lydia Carras, President of Elliniki Etairia, Europa Nostra's country representation in Greece;
3. Silvia Costa, Commissioner for the Italian Government for the Restoration of the Santo Stefano prison and former Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education;
4. Jorge Chaminé, Founder-President of the European Music Centre;
5. Maka Dvalishvili, Executive Director of the Georgian Arts and Culture Centre, Europa Nostra's country representation in Georgia;
6. Bertrand de Feydeau, President of the Fondation des Bernardins, Vice-President of the Fondation du Patrimoine and Vice-President of Europa Nostra;
7. Luca Jahier, former President of the European Economic and Social Committee;
8. Uwe Koch, Council member of Europa Nostra;
9. Héctor M. Aliaga de Miguel, European Heritage Youth Ambassador;
10. Marshall Marcus, Secretary General of the European Union Youth Orchestra;
11. Tapani Mustonen, Architect and Board Member of Europa Nostra;
12. Alfonso Pallavicini, Executive President of the European Historic Houses Association;
13. Catherine Pégard, President of the Public Establishment of the Palace, Museum and National Estate of Versailles who is also President of the European Association of Royal Residences;
14. Araceli Pereda Alonso, President of Hispania Nostra, Europa Nostra's country representation in Spain;
15. Robert Quarles van Ufford, President of the Dutch Castles Foundation and Europa Nostra National Coordinator in The Netherlands;
16. Petr Svoboda, Vice-President of the Association of Castle and Manor Houses Owners, Europa Nostra's country representation in the Czech Republic;
17. Volunteers from Europa Nostra's member organisation Touring Club Italiano.

<https://futureu.europa.eu/>

more sustainable, resilient and beautiful future together.”

“We deeply believe that heritage places, both in urban and rural areas, contribute to citizens’ wellbeing and to their sense of belonging and therefore provide ideal settings for imaginative debates on the future of Europe. We are delighted that so many eminent organisations and individuals active in the field of cultural heritage have already committed to contributing,” concluded Jimmy Jamar, Head of Europa Nostra’s Brussels Office.

A large group of heritage champions from all over Europe already recorded video messages to confirm their commitment to participate in the initiative. All their 9 May messages for the Future of Europe can be viewed on the Europa Nostra Agora.

One of the videos is from Marshall Marcus, Secretary General of the European Union Youth Orchestra. On the occasion of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union to celebrate Europe Day 2021 and the start of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the European Union Youth Orchestra performed in two of Europe’s most culturally and historically significant palaces: the Mafra National Palace in Portugal (inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2020), and the Palais Lichtenau in Potsdam, Germany. The performance was streamed under the title *Time to deliver: What can the Arts do to help Europe’s Recovery?*



A digital meeting of Europa Nostra’s New European Bauhaus Taskforce

The extensive restoration of the Haus Am Horn in Weimar, Germany won a 2021 European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award in the Category Restoration. It was the first exhibition space for the Bauhaus design school in 1923, which had been founded in Weimar in 1919. The house exemplifies the new, experimental type of lifestyle that they proposed. The project succeeded in restoring the original aesthetic of the home with a novel approach that has full respect for the original design.



As with the Conference on the Future of Europe, Europa Nostra is an official partner of the project. Europa Nostra firmly believes that the initiative must take into consideration the current shape and historic character of our cities, villages and rural areas. The cultural heritage field offers models and practices that are sustainable and resilient by nature. Considering the current challenges, in particular climate change*, the vital requirements for improving the quality of new buildings and for nurturing our historic buildings and sites have much in common. The heritage world has a huge amount of know-how to offer to the New European Bauhaus initiative, having broad experience in bringing together a wide range of actors and disciplines, from designers, architects, engineers, urban planners and historians, to local and regional authorities, grassroots organisations, as well as highly qualified workers and craftsmen. Europe's cultural heritage also offers an inspiring framework for social cohesion which contributes to the wellbeing of citizens and their communities.

<https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/>

All vital information on both initiatives and how to participate can be found on the Europa Nostra Agora and europanostra.org

THE NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS

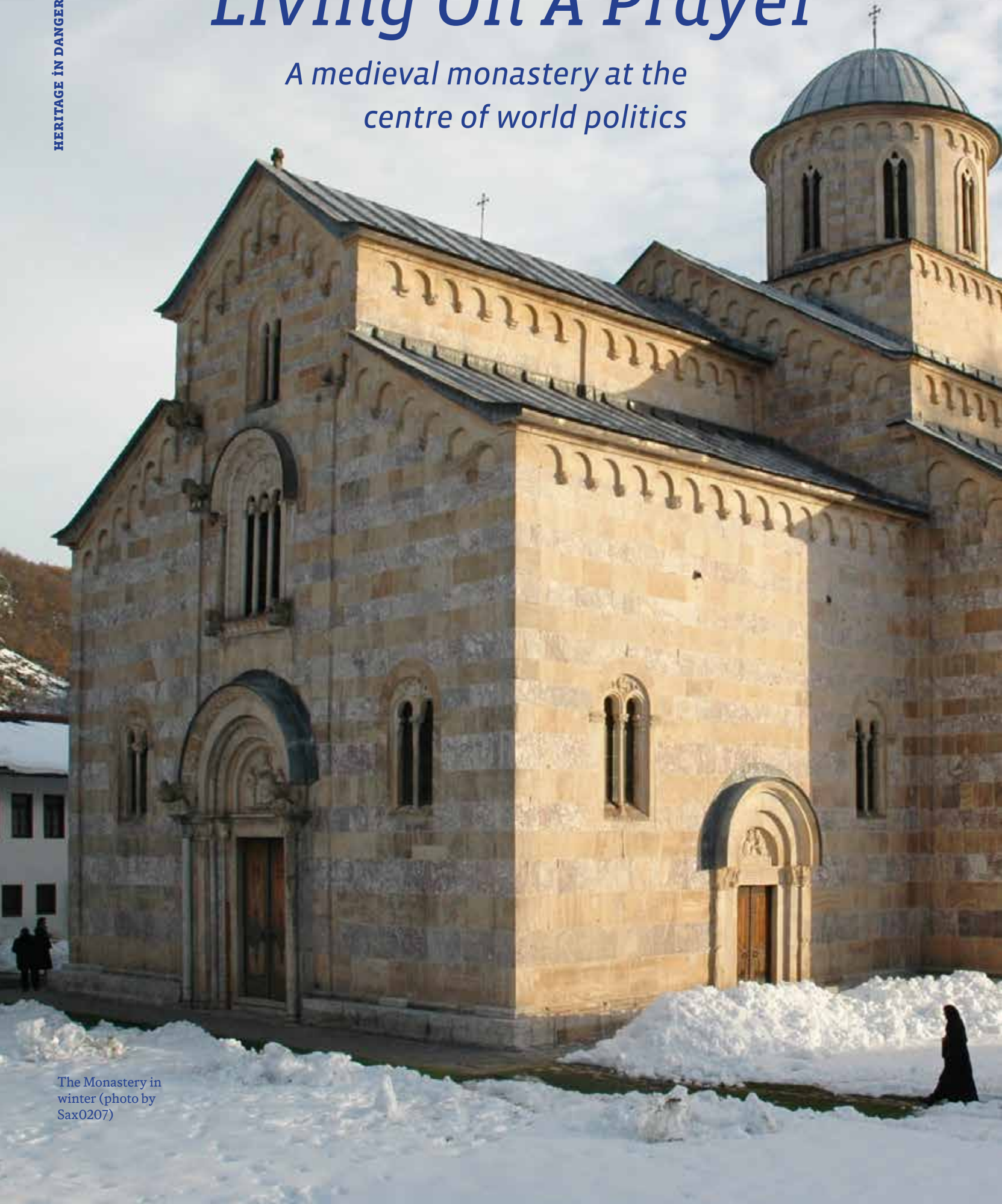
The New European Bauhaus, officially launched by the European Union on 18 January 2021, is inspired by the movement between the two World Wars combining science, architecture, art and culture. The new European Union initiative wants to develop an aesthetic for the green transformation of Europe, combining the needs of the European Green Deal with good design, and to build

a necessary bridge between the world of science and technology with the world of art and culture. The initiative represents a unique opportunity to reconcile people with their living environment, their local communities and their cultural heritage. President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, stated that the New European Bauhaus should show that the necessary can be beautiful at the same time, that style and sustainability can go together.

* See also The European Cultural Heritage Green Paper Putting Europe's shared heritage at the heart of the European Green Deal, which was launched by Europa Nostra on 22 March 2021, in close cooperation with ICOMOS and the Climate Heritage Network and with the input of other members of the European Heritage Alliance. You can read more about this important report in the article *Throwing Caution To The Wind* in this magazine. You can also find the full version on <https://issuu.com/europanostra>

Living On A Prayer

*A medieval monastery at the
centre of world politics*



The Monastery in winter (photo by Sax0207)



Aerial shot of the Monastery

The extraordinary location of the Dečani Monastery in Kosovo* becomes apparent when you look at satellite and drone images. The UNESCO World Heritage site is on the edge of a massive nature reserve that crosses the border into Albania and Montenegro. The Monastery, founded in 1335 by Stefan Dečanski, King of Serbia, seems to exist in perfect harmony with its surroundings.

Its unique church is constructed in a mixture of Romanic, Gothic and Byzantine styles, and is adorned by more than 1,000 original frescoes. The ensemble of buildings that make up the Monastery today is a heritage treasure with the Refectory, the entrance tower and the historic living quarters. In some of them, you can still discover remnants of the original defensive fortifications. The Monastery holds extensive collections of rare documents and books, icons, along with metal and wooden artefacts spanning the centuries.

Exploring the Monastery's courtyard, you enter a world where the earthly and the spiritual are united, and where the divine seems a little closer. Monks in their traditional



The Monastery
in the 1920sAerial shot of
the Monastery

Holy Liturgy



black garb are going about their daily activities quietly. During the busiest months, in summer and fall, you can see them working hard in the gardens and on the fields and vineyards. The hay is gathered, and the corn harvested. Honey, cheese, wines and brandies are being prepared, often with the local community's help. It is hard to imagine a more tranquil and peaceful place, surrounded by deep forests, fresh mountain streams and lush farmlands. It is a joyful place, a calm oasis in a traditionally troubled region. For many years now, these troubles have unfortunately spilt over into monastic life. When you drive up the winding road from the village of Dečan to visit this beautiful site, one encounters roadblocks, armed vehicles and peacekeeping soldiers in full gear at the gate. The contrast could not be more significant, as well as confusing and depressing.

Since June 1999, the Dečani Monastery has been under 24/7 protection by the NATO-led KFOR troops. For many years now, the Monastery has found itself at the centre of a contentious and often openly violent dispute of prejudices, misguided nationalism and false narratives. The demons of the past are rearing their ugly heads once more, and the Monastery is in clear and present danger. The NATO troops permanently stationed at the site, are not for show. The Monastery has been attacked several times, and the situation is, unfortunately, not improving.



Europa Nostra has been actively engaged with the Dečani Monastery for years.

The Dečani Monastery is part of the 2021 edition of the 7 Most Endangered Programme of Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute. By nominating this site for the 7 Most Endangered List, Europa Nostra wishes

to encourage Europe's wider mobilization for eliminating any remaining obstacles to a holistic safeguard of this world heritage treasure. The Advisory Panel of the 7 Most Endangered programme notes that the normalisation of the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo should "ensure adequate protection and interpretation of the multi-cultural and multi-

religious heritage of Kosovo as a prerequisite for lasting peace and prosperity in the wider region." The nomination also mentions the untenable political situation and the severe environmental threats to the Monastery.

Father Sava Janjić is celebrating his 12th anniversary as Abbott of the Monastery this year. His



kind and quiet demeanour is hiding an iron will, necessary to face the many challenges the Monastery confronts daily. The 'cybermonk' - as he is known since his active on-line communication during the Kosovo War of the late '90s with people from across the world - is the face and voice of the Monastery. We caught up with the Reverend Father to discuss the latest developments and the challenges of living in such a unique yet endangered heritage site.

Can you describe a typical day for you and your brethren in the Monastery? What gives you the most joy?

"In short, the Monastery is like a time machine taking us far away in the times of old, with amazing architecture and the natural setting which provide perfect conditions for seeking God in peace and prayer. The



Beekeeping

Monastery is situated in a valley amid the mountains of western Kosovo, covered with thick wood in amazing peace and tranquillity. That was why the Monastery and the area around it are assigned as the Special protective zone. To the west from the Monastery are the rocky cliffs with a number of caves in which hermits lived in the Middle ages. In some of them, there are still fragments of old frescoes."

"Our Monastery follows the typicon (the rule) of a coenobitic Monastery in which 24 members of our brotherhood share common monastic life with regular prayers, liturgical life and common meals. We begin our day with our personal prayers and continue at 6.00 by gathering in the church for the morning cycle of prayers: Midnight-service, Matins, First hour and the Holy Liturgy (Mass). After the service, we

have breakfast and the Third and the Sixth hours are read. Until 15.00, we are busy with our daily chores, or 'obediences' as we call them. At 15.00, we have a second meal and free time for prayer and reading until 18.00 when we start with the evening cycle of prayers: the Ninth hour, Vespers and Compline. The rest of the evening we spend in reading and prayers. Of course, our daily program changes from season to season and is different on feast days. Usually, we have lots of pilgrims who visit the Monastery, but in the time of the coronavirus pandemic, we temporarily remain closed for visits."

Can you describe to me the moment you realised that the Monastery would be a central element in your life and calling?

"As a teenager, I was already a kind of a seeker of a deeper truth that I had always strongly believed existed beyond everyday reality. After lots of reading and visits to Orthodox Christian and other monasteries, especially those on Mount Athos in Greece and getting firmly spiritually attached to the Eastern Orthodox tradition of life in silence (hesychasm). I chose to become a monk although I was studying at that time already English language and literature at the University of Belgrade. For me, the monastic life is one of the most beautiful expressions of our faith in Christ. From a group of individuals we are being transformed into a living body of Christ through our common life, prayers, sharing our joys

and sorrows. Living as a monk one slowly begins to understand that life in Christ is not running away into an imaginary life but actually a deep spiritual transformation in which from an egocentric individual, we become deeply connected with the people we live with and with the entire creation of God. In fact, that communion, which we experience in the Holy Eucharist daily, changes us completely and living in this world we feel more and more that we are not of this world and that our earthly life as we know it is just one aspect of our much deeper form of existence."

What do you hope visitors to the Monastery and its heritage surroundings take away from their visit?

"Of course, most people are enchanted with the Monastery's beauty, but many of them tell us that what particularly touches their heart is a deep feeling of internal peace and tranquillity. We call it the presence of God who as we believe permeates all creation by his Holy Spirit and grants those who open their hearts a particular spiritual insight into a deeper meaning of life."

Mr Joe Biden, the US President, also visited you. Can you share some of your memories of these meetings?

"US President Joe Biden visited the Monastery first as a Senator and then as the Vice President. It is, by all means, one of the particularly memorable visits. Interestingly, we spent most of our discussion talking about faith. We also tackled our daily reality, but that somehow was at that moment much less important than the spiritual impact the Monastery made on Mr Biden. We also had visits by some other heads of states, ministers, many NATO generals and international officials working for various organisations. I believe Dečani Monastery is one of the most iconic Christian sites in the Balkans and hardly anyone who has an opportunity to come over here would miss it."

The Monastery has faced and is facing many challenges. Which do you consider the most urgent and most threatening? Which makes you the saddest and what gives you the most hope?

"Despite the amazing beauty, the high level of preservation



Father Sava and then Vice-President Joe Biden



Peacekeepers
in front of the
Monastery

of the medieval church and impressive history with many preserved artefacts and medieval books, the Monastery was attacked with mortar grenades three times after the war. In 2014, we had graffiti on our outer walls. In 2016 an attempted terrorist attack when a group of armed extremists were arrested at the very gate of the Monastery. Simultaneously, the Monastery as a strong symbol of Serbian Orthodox and historical presence in Kosovo is a thorn in the eye of those who would like Kosovo to become free of Serbs Albanian society. We are often facing insults and slanders in the press. The local authorities fail to recognise our property and often develop projects that threaten the peace of this UNESCO site despite laws that are often completely ignored. These are all reasons

why Dečani Monastery is currently the only Christian site on the European continent under the 24/7 military protection, granted by the NATO-led peacekeepers in Kosovo known as KFOR since 1999. The Monastery is guarded by several checkpoints and regular patrols including those inside the Monastery courtyard. This is a necessity despite the fact that our Monastery, as Mr Joe Biden recognised himself, was an oasis of peace during the war in Kosovo in 1999 when the Monastery offered refuge to many refugees, among them 200 Kosovo Albanians, many of them muslims.”

In an ideal world, how should these challenges be resolved?

“In a society based on the rule of law, with equal respect of all

ethnicities and religions and with particular sensitivity to identity religious groups such as ours, it would be much easier to live regardless of the political solution. However, Kosovo is far from these standards. The Monastery and our Church with many of its medieval sites in Kosovo need a particular kind of protection that must be determined in the process of a European Union-sponsored dialogue. Above all, we need just a normal life without threats, attempts to deny our identity and culture, which generations of monks have preserved for centuries. Kosovo would need to go through a much more thorough transformation to achieve those standards in the current circumstances. That is why the international civilian and military presence in Kosovo remains indispensable to



protect the vulnerable ethnic and religious minorities.”

The Monastery is selected for the 7 Most Endangered Programme: How can the Programme and Europa Nostra help?

“The particular interest shown by Europa Nostra is a very important signal to the European Union and the Kosovo authorities that medieval Christian sites such as ours must be better protected in every way. The Monastery has been on the list of UNESCO’s most endangered monuments for years, and Europa Nostra can do a lot to emphasise that this site is not just important for one religious community but is a monument of universal value for Europe. It constitutes a part of the European treasure. If Kosovo wants to make progress



towards European standards, the local authorities will have to think more seriously about changing their position towards the Serbian Orthodox heritage. At the same time, we believe that the 7 Most Endangered nomination may encourage more assistance in digitalisation of our frescoes and other activities we are currently working on.”

At the present moment, the dream of long-lasting peace in and around the Dečani

Monastery is elusive, but, as the monks and their Abbott Father Sava have known all along, there is always hope. Maybe this time, the winds of change are blowing in the right direction. Perhaps this is the right moment to build new bridges between the various ethnic and religious communities. Maybe this time a sustainable solution can be found. The Dečani Monastery needs European-wide solidarity to protect its cultural and natural heritage for new generations. Its present predicament is a stark reminder that the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding in this region of the Balkans still has a long way to go.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.
www.decani.org

The Monastery
 Sculpture at the
 entrance of the
 church

A New Narrative for Europe

Europa Nostra Secretary General Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovi (1963) discusses the European challenges and opportunities in the 2020s and how safeguarding and developing our cultural heritage is part of solution.*



Secretary General Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic (photo by Felix Quaedvlieg)

* Part of this interview was first published by January 2022 by CHARTER, the European Cultural Heritage Skills Alliance

Since the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018, cultural heritage has been steadily rising on the European Union's list of priorities. To many this could come as a surprise but Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović knows the inner workings of the European Union better than most. The cultural heritage sector has many solutions to offer to the challenges of the 2020s: from rebuilding after the pandemic to conflict resolution and peace-building processes, from climate change to making Europe more inclusive and successful.

Do you think there is a connection between your passion for Europe's shared heritage and its shared values and growing up in former Yugoslavia?

Yes, I think so. I was born and raised in Belgrade, the capital city of Serbia, which at the time was the capital city of Yugoslavia, a federal country which no longer exists. The traumatic experience of witnessing the tragic wars involving the countries of former Yugoslavia in the 90s, with so many lives lost and also with deliberate destruction of monuments and sites as tangible witnesses of the cultural identity of various ethnic and religious communities, changed me

profoundly. It made me a forceful advocate of building bridges and tearing down walls through culture. Instead of being misused to divide communities, our shared cultural heritage should enhance the understanding of the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of our communities while at the same time fostering our sense of belonging to a larger European family. I believe it is a vital tool for conflict resolution and peace-building processes in Europe and elsewhere in the world. The Balkan Wars led to the breakup of Yugoslavia. These events coincided with the start of my life with Europa Nostra. Thirty years later, my passion for Europe's shared cultural heritage and its shared values has not diminished at all. I feel it is more powerful and inspiring than ever before. I know my strong dedication to Europa Nostra's important mission and action is rooted in my experiences in former Yugoslavia, good and bad.

Europa Nostra believes that cultural heritage could be a positive catalyst for change on many of the tough dossiers the European Union has to tackle in the years to come. Can you explain how this would work, for instance, in the battle against climate change?

Thanks to our collective effort, the contribution of cultural heritage to climate action has gained visibility and momentum. For instance, during this COP26 there have been at least 15 heritage-related events, some of them at Ministerial level. But it is not enough. The Report "Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis" by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which was issued during the COP 26 shows that global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless drastic reductions in CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions occur. Given the gravity and urgency of the situation, we need to do more and be faster. Every individual, every professional and every political leader must do their part to counter the climate emergency. And the cultural heritage world stands ready to take on this challenge and has clearly demonstrated its commitment to do so.

Europe, as one of the world's largest legacy greenhouse gas emitters and with a comparatively well-funded culture sector, has both the obligation and a great opportunity for stimulating culture-led climate action in

Biography:

Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović obtained a degree in International Law in Belgrade (former Yugoslavia) and in European Law and Politics in Nancy (France). Prior to joining Europa Nostra, she worked for EU Institutions in Brussels and then for the European Commission Delegation in Belgrade. In 1991,

she was one of the founders and the first Secretary-General of the European Movement in Yugoslavia. Besides her work as Secretary General of Europa Nostra, she is a member of the Advisory Board of Europeana Foundation, the Advisory Council of the European Union Youth Orchestra and of the Steering

Committee of the "Centre européen de la Musique." On 8 March 2021, she initiated the #Women4Heritage Network, an informal network without borders, aiming to stimulate and facilitate an exchange of ideas and opportunities between women in the heritage field.

Delegation of Europa Nostra – composed of (left to right) Executive Vice-President Guy Clausse, Secretary General Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic, Executive President Hermann Parzinger, European Policy Coordinator Lorena Aldana-Ortega – visiting Mariya Gabriel, EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth in 2020



Europe and beyond. We are fully committed to champion this mobilisation, in particular in our new role as the Regional Co-Chair of the Climate Heritage Network (CHN) for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. In the upcoming years, we shall continue mobilising our wide network – including through the European Heritage Alliance and the Climate Heritage Network – and our expertise and advocacy skills to further strengthen the “Heritage4Climate movement” in Europe and globally.

The year 2021 has clearly marked a momentum for cultural heritage as a resource for the European Green Deal and the green transformation of our societies. Since 2019, Europa Nostra has placed the topic of cultural heritage and climate high on its agenda and initiated close cooperation with ICOMOS, the Climate Heritage Network and the European Investment

Bank Institute to produce the European Cultural Heritage Green Paper. Presented in March 2021, this Paper correlates the contribution of cultural heritage to all key areas of the European Green Deal, including Clean Energy, Circular Economy, the Renovation Wave, Smart Mobility, Farm to Fork, Green Finance and a Just Transition, Research and Innovation, Education and Training, as well as Green Deal Diplomacy. It proposes a series of concrete recommendations both for policy-makers and for cultural heritage stakeholders to duly put our shared cultural heritage at the heart of the European Green Deal.

This was one of Europa Nostra’s major policy contributions to the New European Bauhaus initiative, of which we are a proud official partner. Launched by the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen in September 2020,

the New European Bauhaus aims at bringing the European Green Deal closer to citizens and their living spaces by bridging the world of science and technology with the world of art and culture. This creative and interdisciplinary community gathers designers, architects, engineers, scientists, students and creative minds across disciplines to imagine our collective future around the core values of sustainability, aesthetics and inclusiveness. As an official partner, we have aligned all our activities to the New European Bauhaus values and continue to advocate the need for a heritage-led transformation of our society, economy and environment to address the pressing challenges that Europe is facing.

Against this backdrop, Europa Nostra hosted a very special European Cultural Heritage Summit 2021 from 21 to 24 September in Venice – the first

and largest physical European event of its kind since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. It received the support of the European Union and was held under the patronage of the European Parliament, the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the Italian Ministry of Culture. The Summit was a contribution to the New European Bauhaus, the Conference on the Future of Europe and the European Climate Pact. The Summit concluded with the release of the Venice Call to Action “For a New European Renaissance” which notably aims at unleashing the potential of culture-based climate action in the work leading up to and follow-up of the COP26 as well as in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs.

How will this partnership in the New European Bauhaus develop further in the 2020s?

The New European Bauhaus unfolds in several phases. It started with the co-design phase from October 2020 to June 2021, to which everybody could contribute by submitting ideas and good examples or organising events. This phase also marked the launch of the New European Bauhaus Prizes in 10 categories to celebrate existing achievements and support the younger generation to further develop emerging concepts and ideas. As an official partner, we were delighted to be part of the Jury and assess so many inspiring projects from across Europe.

Building upon these first months

of collecting input, the delivery phase started in September 2021 with the adoption of a Commission Communication defining the core principles and key actions that will drive the New European Bauhaus forward. This framework foresees the annual organisation of the New European Bauhaus Prizes and a New European Bauhaus Festival, the first edition of which shall take place in June 2022 in Brussels. In parallel, a New European Bauhaus Lab (NEB Lab) is under development, which will test tools and solutions and develop concrete policy recommendations. Europa Nostra looks forward to contributing to the work of the NEB Lab and exchanging with peers from all over Europe.

The combination of several EU financing instruments will also result in the launch of calls for proposals, especially under the Horizon Europe Programme, the LIFE programme, the ERDF, the Single Market Programme, Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. We encourage all relevant stakeholders to keep an eye out for these unprecedented opportunities to shape together a more sustainable, more inclusive and more beautiful future in Europe and beyond.

Europa Nostra actively contributes to the new European programmes, but you also develop your own initiatives?

Yes, of course. We presented The Venice Call to Action “For a New European Renaissance” on the occasion of the European Heritage Policy Agora “From the New European Bauhaus to the

New European Renaissance,” held on 24 September 2021 at the Giorgio Cini Foundation as the concluding event of the European Cultural Heritage Summit 2021 in Venice.

The Venice Call to Action makes a strong plea to European leaders at all levels of governance – European, national, regional and local – as well as to all heritage actors – public, private and civil society – to duly integrate the transformative power of culture and cultural heritage among the strategic priorities for the reshaping of our societies. It outlines a series of pressing challenges facing our continent – from the post-pandemic recovery to climate change – and stresses the vital positive contribution of culture and cultural heritage to successfully address them.

The Venice Call to Action puts forward 12 concrete and actionable proposals to place our shared cultural heritage where it belongs – at the very heart of the entire European project. These proposals include for example the empowerment of the younger generation to actively participate in the shaping of a more sustainable future in particular during the 2022 Year of European Youth, the organisation of a special inter-committee hearing in the European Parliament on the future of historic cities, sites and related landscapes affected by the effects of climate change and mass tourism or the support to the development of philanthropy with a European purpose as well as public-private partnerships and investments in the wider heritage sector.

Secretary General Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic presents Commissioner Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, EU Vice-President and Commissioner for Promoting our European Way of Life the Golden Jubilee Book *Fragile Earth* produced by Elliniki Etairia, Greek country representation of Europa Nostra, on 31 January, 2022



This document is the direct contribution by Europa Nostra and its network to unleash the potential of cultural heritage for the European Green Deal, the New European Bauhaus, the 2022 Year of European Youth, among other key priorities of the European Union, and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. We now welcome the contribution and support of stakeholders from the wider heritage sphere to concretely implement these proposals in 2022 and beyond!

How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the heritage sector in the long term?

Over the past few months, the cultural heritage ecosystem has swiftly transformed and adapted to new challenges and trends, proving at the same time its resilience to unprecedented challenges. The pandemic has accelerated the digital shift, creating more inclusive cultural experiences. Major cultural institutions have turned challenges into digital opportunities to continue their

activities as well as to keep their audiences entertained and engaged while reaching new ones across Europe and beyond. Digital practices, such as 3D modelling, also have the potential to drive creativity for the emergence of a more sustainable and a more innovative heritage sector.

However, as pointed out in our report “COVID-19 & Beyond: Challenges and Opportunities for Cultural Heritage” – resulting from a consultation among our large membership – the COVID-19 crisis also highlighted and further widened inequalities with smaller cultural organisations that are missing out on digital opportunities. These digital inequalities and gaps can lead to a worrying lack of diversity in cultural and heritage content and offer. This is why it is essential to boost the digital capacity and skills of cultural actors at all levels, hence ensuring a better safeguard of our shared heritage and its wider access based on a more democratic and inclusive approach.

To ensure the lasting legacy of promising initiatives such as the New European Bauhaus and the work of the Climate Heritage Network, it is also vital to train the new generation of heritage professionals to incorporate the respect of green and quality principles into their everyday work directly or indirectly related to cultural heritage.

For instance, jobs related to digital heritage and digitalisation shall become increasingly important in the near future. Professions ensuring the sustainable conservation and renovation of heritage, and more generally jobs linking cultural heritage and climate action, shall also experience a boom.

Traditional crafts, knowledge and skills will also experience a ‘new Renaissance’ as an integral part of our intangible cultural heritage; they enhance sustainability, are deeply rooted on our local communities and constitute a positive resource for our societies. To deploy their full potential, these jobs and skills must be based on proper education and training systems. We also need to reach out to the public at large through engaging communication and dissemination. I am optimistic that we can face the challenges that are facing us, even if they sometimes seem insurmountable. Despite the difficult choices we all have to make in the years to come, I also see unprecedented opportunities for the heritage sector. We are not just a part of solution, we are central to it.

Invest In Culture Against Rising Walls In The EU's Neighbourhood

In this article for the Friends of Europe Balkans Journey Series*, Europa Nostra's Secretary General Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović and Europa Nostra Serbia's Secretary General Vesna Marjanović circumvent stagnant debates on enlargement in order to focus on moving the region forward in practical terms through political imagination and forward-looking solutions.

Friends of Europe is think tank which advocated for a new 21st-century social contract based on peace, prosperity and sustainability. We support a multilateral world with cities, regions, states, supranational institutions, companies and citizens cooperating to solve common challenges, and we embrace European values and freedoms.

Invest In Culture Against Rising Walls In The EU's Neighbourhood

More than a decade ago, when the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was created as part of the EU's external relations, later to be attached to the EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement's portfolio, many saw it as the writing on the wall for the Western Balkans' future in the European Union. Impressions and hopes of a steady path towards EU integration have since been undermined quite dramatically.

Instead of becoming ever-closer neighbours, the gulf between the EU and Western Balkans has grown, dangerously so, and the prospect of a new enlargement process is vague and uncertain. Euroscepticism and anti-EU sentiments seem to be prevailing on all sides, and champions of nationalism and disintegration now act as if this was always meant to be. In Belgrade, 30 years after the wars that destroyed the former Yugoslavia, police safeguard graffitied walls depicting convicted war criminals, journalists are frequently harassed and threatened, and democratic activists are defamed in state-controlled tabloids.

Between enlargement fatigue in EU countries and disillusionment and apathy in the Western Balkans, we tend to forget how many dramatic events have happened in our world, even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Continuous crises – including the management of European debt, Brexit, the ongoing European migrant crisis, terrorist attacks, the impact of AI and machines on the labour market, and the detrimental effects already caused by climate change – have affected the whole of Europe in different ways and shifted many narratives and priorities. The populists' learning curve has brought us into a new era of inequality, nationalism, xenophobia and disregard for human rights. Walls and barbed wires are preventing migrants from fleeing to a better life, while simultaneously generating further tensions around these new borders. All this is happening under our watch and behind the façade of Europe's democracy and values.

The EU should intensify projects in support of our shared European cultural values in the Western Balkans. Post-World War 2 values were embedded in peace and progress and based on human dignity. Have we already witnessed the peak of liberty and human rights? If the answer is no, are we prepared to defend what has been painstakingly built for generations? And how?

"We must remember that it is culture, not war, that cements our European identity" were the words of novelist Umberto Eco. As activists for cultural rights and cultural heritage in Europe, we can clearly see that the cultural bonds we share – histories and heritage, languages and literature, folklore and myths – are all intertwined. Both tangible and intangible, they form the basis of our much-needed sense of solidarity and togetherness. Culture also plays a vital role in encouraging a creative response to political, social and environmental challenges, but only if decision-makers in the public and private sectors acknowledge and respect its multifaceted value.

The recent launch of a dedicated Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport at the EU-Western Balkans Summit held in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia in October is a most welcomed step. However, we need to make sure that citizens and communities are indeed enjoying the benefits of



Vesna Marjanović

these initiatives. Developing innovative and holistic approaches to cultural and educational policies, as well as improving access to culture for everyone, especially marginalised, underprivileged and young individuals, is essential. The EU should intensify projects in support of our shared European cultural values in the Western Balkans.

Committed to cultural heritage, Europa Nostra stands ready to contribute to these efforts. When united in protecting and celebrating our shared cultural heritage, Europeans from all corners of the continent can muster a powerful positive energy. This energy is not only a catalyst for peace and reconciliation, but also for sustainable and green transformation of our society, economy and environment.

Culture is a key resource for intellectual renewal and human capital. Active participation in cultural activities helps people develop a creative and critical mindset, a broader understanding of different perspectives and respect for others. The ideas and principles of the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus ... must be extended and defended beyond the present borders of the EU.

Sustained investment in education and cultural activities must be given equal priority with investment in economy, infrastructure, security and all other areas seen as crucial to Europe's global competitiveness and stability. Our diversity is what unites us, and promoting this cultural heritage and pluralism will have a positive impact on our strategic goals of innovation and sustainable development. It is also important to foster public participation in cultural and democratic life by engaging with citizens and civil society who are committed to the promotion of inclusion, non-discrimination and democratic values in the management of heritage institutions.

New strategies and programmes should be developed to intensify cultural exchange within the Western Balkans and also between the region and EU member states. This could lead to a re-unification of cultures and memories, in addition to the integration of our markets, and be submitted as a *condicio sine qua non* of the Western Balkans' future membership to the EU.

Last but not least, the ideas and principles of the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus, which emphasise the vital cultural component of climate action, must be extended and defended beyond the present borders of the EU. Providing coherent support for innovative, sustainable and inclusive urban policies at national and local levels through investment in the protection of heritage, especially in disadvantaged cities and villages, should be a common effort.

The enemies of Europe may be loud, but regardless of the many barriers that we are facing now, we need to reinvent ourselves and make sure that we do not succumb to fear, estrangement and lack of solidarity. The Europeans of the Western Balkans are still dedicated to European values, with the ideals of democracy, human rights and the rule of law at their core. They are the real partners of the European Union.

*Published in the Friends of Europe online policy journal, December 2021

“Cultural Heritage is a powerful catalyst for the Future of Europe”

The official responsibilities of European Commissioner Mariya Gabriel seem overwhelming at first glance and even at a second or third glance. As Commissioner of Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, some of the most challenging European dossiers are part of her mission. Every aspect of her portfolio contributes to making the EU stronger, more resilient and competitive, but also closer to European citizens. She also oversees important policy areas such as sports and raising awareness on digital disinformation and media literacy. Furthermore, she leads the 2022 European Year of Youth.

Even though her agenda is exceptionally full, she always gladly makes time for discussions on cultural heritage and celebrating the best heritage projects in the European Heritage Awards / Europe Nostra Awards. As it happens, Gabriel hails from the region of South East Europe, from Bulgaria, and is a strong and vocal supporter of the invaluable contribution of Europe’s cultural heritage to our society, economy and environment.



Why do you put the cultural heritage sector so high on your agenda of priorities?

For me, cultural heritage is not just a sector. It is Europe's soul. It should be mainstreamed across all EU policies. Our society, our European Union is based on our shared cultural heritage. It belongs to all of us. It is part of who we are. It is also a great source of revenue for local economies via tourism development and by the numerous creative jobs that show the richness of Europe.

The Covid-19 outbreak has shaken our way of life. It has and will force us to rethink our way of life; this is also true for the European Union. Let us pause for a moment, look at how our cultural heritage inspires us to make a new start based on Europe's hearts and talents.

On my side, I will use the unique opportunity of having Research and Innovation, as well as Education, Culture and Youth in my portfolio to further promote cultural heritage. For instance, our knowledge square based on Education, Research, Innovation and Service to Society, has its roots planted in cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage is also at the basis of the cohesion of the European continent. Jean Monnet said: "People only accept change when they are faced with necessity, and only recognise necessity when a crisis is upon them." Let us seize these challenging crises as an opportunity to reaffirm the heart of our EU project: culture

and cultural heritage. We need to show that we cherish our local heritage, our roots, our soul and our identity, while at the same time committing to an inclusive and united Europe.

Are new European initiatives as the Conference of the Future of Europe and the New European Bauhaus reflective of these ideas?

Yes, and I am thrilled by the active role that Europa Nostra plays in both initiatives. The idea behind the New European Bauhaus is to bridge the world of science and technology with the world of art and culture. We want to bring people together to find new ways of living sustainable, inclusive lives. For that, we need to leverage the best of our architecture, design, technology, art and culture. We have established the European Bauhaus Prizes to reward the best innovative initiatives, and we were very excited with the results.

The overarching goal of the New European Bauhaus is to shape Europe's future living environment around the core values of sustainability, aesthetics and inclusiveness. We know that cultural heritage is highly relevant to the success of this ambitious initiative. Our European cities and regions are built over centuries of history, reflected in buildings and landscapes alike.

One example of how widely cultural heritage is supported by the Union is our success in ensuring financial support for the cultural and heritage sector in the Next Generation EU

recovery plan. This will result in a more robust and broader recognition of the positive impact of culture and cultural heritage on key EU priorities. Connecting to civil society and the local communities is a crucial factor to the success of our goals.

Without the broad support of Europe's citizens, we cannot build a sustainable and resilient future of Europe. We need to reach out to all corners of Europe and actively involve the younger generations. The success stories of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards are very inspiring examples of a grassroots level approach. For instance, the award winner "Following in the Steps of Bulgarian Folklore," from my native Bulgaria, presented folk dances and folktales in a surprising way and engaged new audiences with Bulgarian intangible heritage. At this moment, when Europe is determined to build back better, these success stories are a true inspiration and a powerful example of what we, as Europeans, can achieve together.

Some commentators have said that the COVID-19 was just a dress rehearsal for what is waiting for us around the corner: global climate change.

I am an optimistic person at heart, so I hope we will rise to the occasion. I believe in the holistic approach reflected in the European Green Deal. Climate change is not just an immense challenge, it also gives us the opportunity to come together and tackle urgent issues together as Europeans and inhabitants



EU Commissioner Mariya Gabriel during her speech during the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards in Venice, 2021

of this fragile planet. Everyone needs to do their bit to reach the goals we must set. For the European Green Deal to work, we need culture at its core.

With its power to drive positive change, cultural heritage can become also part of the solution, helping us to come up with green solutions that contribute to the EU Green Deal. And the European Cultural Heritage Green Paper produced by Europa Nostra in close cooperation with ICOMOS and the Climate Heritage Network shows us the many ways how cultural heritage can help the fight against climate change.

And we should not be afraid to look to a more sustainable future when it comes to cultural heritage. That is why, we set up a working group with national experts to reflect on “Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change.” The final report with its recommendations will be published later this year. I am

pleased that the progress of the group’s work was highlighted at COP26 in November 2021. It shows that culture becomes an intrinsic part of the solution to the challenges posed by climate change, and digitisation.

I am glad that Europa Nostra along with ICOMOS could meet the group and have a lively exchange of ideas and expertise. I am looking forward to the group’s final report and its recommendations, which will be published later this year.

As is also clear from the paper, innovation, research, culture, and education will also be crucial to our competitiveness and our ability to lead in the transition to a climate-neutral economy and a new digital age. The Joint Action Plan with the Committee of the Regions, which I initiated almost one and a half year ago, encompasses 26 concrete actions. They will increase the administrative and implementation capacity of the Regions in the fields

of my portfolio, reducing the innovation divide and building a well-interconnected innovation ecosystem in Europe. The common denominator among all these actions is – once again – that they touch on citizens in their daily life.

And we need to make sure that many more young Europeans are aware and able to benefit from the support and opportunities we designed for them through our strengthened programmes, empowering them to embody a Europe of talent, not just in this European Year of Youth but for years to come.

New plans are important and give hope, but the heritage field is still catching its breath from the COVID-19 crisis.

The cultural sector was hit so hard by the crisis. In 2020, the cultural and creative sectors lost 31% of their revenues. The performing arts and music were particularly hard hit, losing 90% and 76% of their respective

turnover, compared to 2019. And the official numbers over 2021 will probably be worse. Yet, as hard as it is, we must turn this disaster into an opportunity to invest and channel recovery funds to our cultural and creative sectors.

Culture and cultural heritage is a strategic investment. We have worked a lot to encourage Member States to consider culture as a strategic investment. As a result, you remember our common objective, we managed to achieve, at EU level, more than 2% of this instrument dedicated to cultural and creative sectors, cultural heritage, and this in the national resilience and recovery plans. And I would like to thank also Culture Action Europe, The

European Cultural Foundation and the European Heritage Alliance, coordinated by Europa Nostra, for their support into this initiative.

We have a whole range of strong instruments at our disposal. There is, of course, Creative Europe, our flagship programme for culture, promoting social inclusion, pluralism, intercultural dialogue and freedom of expression. The new programme has received substantial increase in funding – a total of 2.4 billion euros over 7 years. Then we have many other EU funds, from the Recovery & Resilience Facility to the European Structural & Investment Funds, not forgetting Digital Europe or Horizon

Europe with – for the first time - a dedicated Cluster on Culture, Cultural Heritage and Creativity.

Furthermore, a new Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) will support the innovation ecosystems in the Cultural and Creative Sectors, facilitating access to finance, training and upskilling. I would like to invite your readers to spread the word and help shape the future of the EIT KIC Culture and Creativity.

With these instruments and many others, we will support social cohesion – promoting well-being and mental health, shifting mentalities to more sustainable models, and promoting gender



EU Commissioner Mariya Gabriel during a visit to Salamanca University (founded in 1218) in Spain



European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards winner 2021 "In the Footsteps of Bulgarian Folklore

equality. Mental health and well-being, especially for our youth, is indeed one of the most pressing issues in the wake of the pandemic.

But we also know that having access to these funds is not always easy, and quick. That is why, I strongly encourage you to use CulturEU. It is the first time that the Commission has developed a user-centred "one-stop-shop" on EU funding opportunities for culture and cultural heritage. In just 3 clicks, you can find out 75 funding opportunities and which one is best suited to your needs.

Allow me to add one more point. When the pandemic forced us into confinement, we continually turned to culture and cultural

heritage for solace in difficult times. It played a vital role when we felt disconnected or isolated. It helped us improve our mood, reduce anxiety, and find meaning. It made us even more aware that our culture and cultural heritage reflect our shared humanity through our shared past. It reaffirmed that the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage is the fundamental basis of European values.

Cultural heritage protection is not just necessary for its essential role in economic growth, employment and community building, but primarily because of our responsibility towards future generations. They have the right

to learn and benefit from our past. For this reason, through our programmes such as Erasmus+ and Solidarity Corps, we strengthen young people's awareness and understanding of cultural heritage and learn to take ownership of this heritage.

Cultural heritage is a powerful catalyst for the Future of Europe. Especially in South East Europe, there are so many beautiful places waiting to be discovered, promoted and developed. We should redouble our efforts to preserve, as much as we can. On a more general level, a regional programme for the Western Balkans will start on 1 April, 2022, promoting intercultural dialogue and enhancing the socio-economic impact of the



cultural and creative sector in this region. Cultural heritage is of course part of this 8 million euros programme, which is implemented by a consortium led by UNESCO, one of our main international partners.

Safeguarding our European heritage is a sound investment in the future of Europe. The 7 Most Endangered Programme of Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute is an excellent example of these efforts.

The European Union is intensely engaged in international cultural relations, with programmes supporting the cultural sector designed jointly with our colleagues from the European External Action Service.

Cooperation in the cultural heritage sector is one of its three pillars. We believe this cooperation with our partner countries, especially with local communities, strongly contributes to intercultural dialogue, conflict prevention, reconciliation and resilience, proving to be a shield against intolerance and violent extremism.

If there are so many societal benefits in protecting and restoring heritage, what is your take on safeguarding cultural heritage outside of Europe?

That is extremely important. Wherever cultural heritage is destroyed or neglected, it is a loss for all of us. The international

protection of cultural heritage is not an objective we can attain alone. We need to unite forces with all like-minded countries and institutions in the world, with UNESCO and the Council of Europe. It is only by pooling resources and coordinating our responses that we will be able to make a difference.

As much as climate change is a global challenge, so is the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property and the protection of heritage, not just in Europe but around the globe. All of this work is necessary and urgent and will help us make sure that cultural heritage is a driving force towards the future we want: a future that is sustainable and inclusive.

The EU Commission
in 2021

Food is Culture

'You are what you eat' may be more than a cliché; it may be a way of life. Food is so central to our everyday routine that every aspect of it impacts our society. Our food reveals who we are on many different levels.

Sharing food,
sharing heritage



Sharing food, sharing heritage (photo by Alessandro Vargiu)



What we eat and drink is deeply intertwined with our culture and is one of the best examples of our shared European heritage. The European Union-funded Food is Culture project* increases awareness about the European roots of what we put on our tables; how our food expresses our cultural diversity and how at the same time our shared heritage is expressed in our food.

This project of European collaboration among Sweden, Italy, Serbia and Croatia, together with Europa Nostra, connects the dots on many complex, urgent, and timely issues. The intangible cultural heritage of food is an underestimated European resource. It is used to promote tourism and local products, but it is rarely viewed as an essential part of our European identity. Industrially produced agricultural products and



processed foods have all but replaced the cultural value of our long-lasting food traditions. This historical link between the production of food and the preparation and enjoyment of food should be reestablished.

The project activities kicked off in 2018 with the creation of a multimedia artwork/exhibition based on the contents of the Ark of Taste archive. The Ark archive is an initiative of the Slow Food network and is a catalogue of endangered food from around

the world. The exhibition/artwork shows the stories and traditions behind traditional European food production and preparation. The artwork – made of objects, photos, videos, and projections – was exhibited in several countries. The related video documentary was shown in many cultural spaces in the participating countries and during Europa Nostra's European Cultural Heritage Summit in Paris in 2019. The director of the film, Lorenzo Vignolo, explained his vision: *"A beautiful story moves everything, moves you inside. And food and culture have millions of fascinating stories to tell and to weave, the emotion of rediscovering the origins as well as the value of food. It is not easy, but my role is an extraordinary one because it allows me to meet many people and to harmonise the interweaving of different cultures, traditions and identities."*

The winner of the Chef's competition: Lena Flaten of Flammans Skafferri restaurant in Storlien, Sweden with her Taco Jämtland, featuring beans, mushrooms and goat's cheese with a gooseberry sauce)



Reconnecting school children to food production was an important part of the project

The project also hosted several outreach projects. In Sweden and Italy migrants were invited to come to the events and to share the food traditions from their home countries. A contest was organised in which more than 40 Swedish and Italian chefs were challenged to come up with recipes inspired by the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. The partners from Serbia and Croatia invited schoolchildren to ask their grandparents for traditional recipes. Ten schools in Serbia and five in Croatia participated in these hands-on activities with hundreds of participants.

The project also had an important political aspect. Europa Nostra, using its wide network across Europe and policy expertise, was leading the effort to put the preservation of the European gastronomic cultural heritage at the top of Europe's political agendas.

One of the goals of the Food is Culture project was to make politicians at the European level more aware of the economical and societal value of food heritage at a time when citizens are increasingly paying attention to sustainability and wellbeing. It should be actively promoted and safeguarded on every level, including across Europe. The cultural heritage of food is not only an essential building block of Europe's future, it also offers solutions for the many challenges ahead.

It should come as no surprise that many of the 21st-century most pressing challenges are linked to food production, from climate change to sustainability, from overpopulation to the European Green Deal. The way we produce and consume food is connected at almost all levels to our cultural heritage: from preserving traditional agricultural



skills to empowering local communities, from protecting fragile ecosystems to bringing back historical produce and documenting the disappearing local food heritage. As Jimmy Jamar, head of Europa Nostra's Brussels Office pointed out: *"It should be evident that food is culture, that food is heritage. But the existence of the Food is Culture project shows that we still have a lot of work to do to bring heritage and food as a transversal element into EU policies."*

Piero Sardo, President of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, summed up the political urgency of the project: *"There is still much to be done to bring the world of food closer to the world of culture, but there must be a growing awareness that they are two worlds that are interchangeable and not incompatible as they want us to believe. We must anchor*



our culture at the roots of our tradition, of our agriculture. To save the endangered planet we must start again from the earth, and in particular from food. We are eating our planet. We have an important and urgent job to do.”

Many of the concluding activities of the Food is Culture project were planned for early 2020. The global pandemic demanded creativity and flexibility. The project was extended to the end of 2020 but some of the activities, such as the final display of the exhibition at BOZAR, The Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels could not take place as planned. Instead, Slow Food and Europa Nostra co-hosted a lively Zoom debate, titled *Food and Cultural Heritage: an EU Policy Perspective* on 17 November 2020. This concluding conference focused on how to achieve



better coherence between food, agricultural and cultural policies. During the discussion with representatives from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development and Directorate-General for Education and Culture, the project partners presented their EU Policy Brief on Food and Cultural Heritage. The Brief suggests a clear roadmap on how the concept of Food is Culture can be beneficial and instrumental to many of the Union's goals.

Food as cultural heritage is back at the head table of the European Union, offering a full menu of possibilities and opportunities. Wider support and promotion of the value of food as shared cultural heritage from the European Union and all Europeans is a recipe for success.



*The Food is Culture is a partnership among:

Slow Food (Italy) www.slowfood.com

Kinookus Association (Croatia) <http://www.kinookus.hr/index.php/en/>

Nova Iskra Creative Hub (Serbia) <https://novaiskra.com/en/home-page/>

Transpond AB (Sweden) <http://www.transpond.se/>

Europa Nostra (The Netherlands) <http://www.europanostra.org/>

The Food is Culture project is co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, with the contribution of the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Cuneo. The project had to adapt to COVID-19 but is still ongoing.

Multimedia exhibition (photos by Christopher Hunt)

New Life for Old Churches



The restored church in Boz

All across South East Europe, hundreds if not thousands of historic village churches suffer from a lack of maintenance, financial means, and support. On top of that, their aging congregations are getting smaller and smaller. How can all these churches find a new future?

So far, it has proven to be very difficult to create viable, sustainable solutions for many of them, but the tide seems to be turning. No matter how dire the circumstances and the prognosis, younger generations have now risen to the challenge and are increasingly restoring and protecting their heritage.

Elsewhere in this magazine, you can read about the young

professionals and volunteers of the Ambulance for Monuments project in Romania, a 2020 European Heritage/Europa Nostra Award recipient. One of the other organisations that have been very active in saving small churches is the Pro Patrimonio Foundation, an international non-profit, non-governmental organisation with branches in Romania, Great Britain, and France.



In Romania, Pro Patrimonio decided to stop the downward spiral of structural and artistic degradation and started the 60 Wooden Churches project, with the support of the Order of Architects. The goal? To save, preserve, and restore small wooden churches to returned use and relevance. Șerban Sturdza, former president of the Order of Architects in Romania and executive director of Pro Patrimonio, initiated the programme. The two organisations have started emergency interventions in wooden churches in the counties of Sibiu, Hunedoara, Gorj, and Vâlcea. In 2014, they successfully nominated the small wooden village churches in the rural regions of southern Transylvania and northern Oltenia to Europa Nostra and The European Investment Bank Institute's 7 Most Endangered list. The World Monuments Fund also supports the project, reflecting the international importance of these small wooden churches to Europe's cultural heritage.

The churches are the southernmost example of the wooden architecture of Central

and Northern Europe. Most of them were built in the 18th century, in local timber, and with polychrome decorations both inside and outside. Over time, most were replaced by larger stone-built churches. Under the communist regime, what remained of these churches was neglected, and many fell into disrepair. Add the harsh climate to the mix, and the result is that most of these buildings are dilapidated shadows of their former selves. At present, some 80% are abandoned.

Village churches are usually efficient in form and execution, built by the local population from readily available materials. Much effort was put into the decoration, mostly applying paint directly to wood or using al fresco lime plastering techniques. These decorations form an almost uninterrupted colourful canvas on the church walls and ceilings, telling the story of God, demons, saints, and holy men and their local significance.

This reflection of village life, captured in paint, is an extremely vulnerable aspect of the restoration process. Young professionals and volunteers work together with the local craftsmen to revive old skills and increase knowledge of materials and building techniques. The restorations also renew a sense of community, cooperation, and intergenerational solidarity. More than fourteen emergency interventions and eight church restorations have been carried out. More than 50 wooden churches (through architectural surveys) have been documented. Various exhibitions and concerts

have been organised for fundraising, both in Bucharest and in local communities. A prime example of this success is the church in Boz (Hunedoara County), constructed in 1791. After an emergency intervention to save the church from further decay, the roof was completely renewed in 2012. The rest of the church was restored over the following years. Now it stands proudly next to the new stone church, its future secured.

Restoring small village churches is a complex problem, not just because so many of them are in remote locations, but also because of the constant effort needed to raise enough funds. Another complicating factor is the dialogue with the different owners and the need to involve interdisciplinary teams with various skills, from icon restorers and mural painters to wood experts and biologists. However, the biggest challenge is time. The rate of destruction and disappearance of these wooden churches is higher than the percentage of emergency interventions and conservations. To succeed long-term and to beat these horrible statistics, the restorations and renewal projects need to be stepped up. A greater rate of restorations can only happen with wider support on the national and European level. The publication of the 7 Most Endangered handbook *Wooden Churches: Guide for common maintenance and repairs** in 2017 with the help of the European Investment Bank Institute was one such step on a European level. Restoring the thousands of wooden churches across the region should not just be inspired by their cultural and social value but also by their economic value as part of South East Europe's long-term sustainable development.

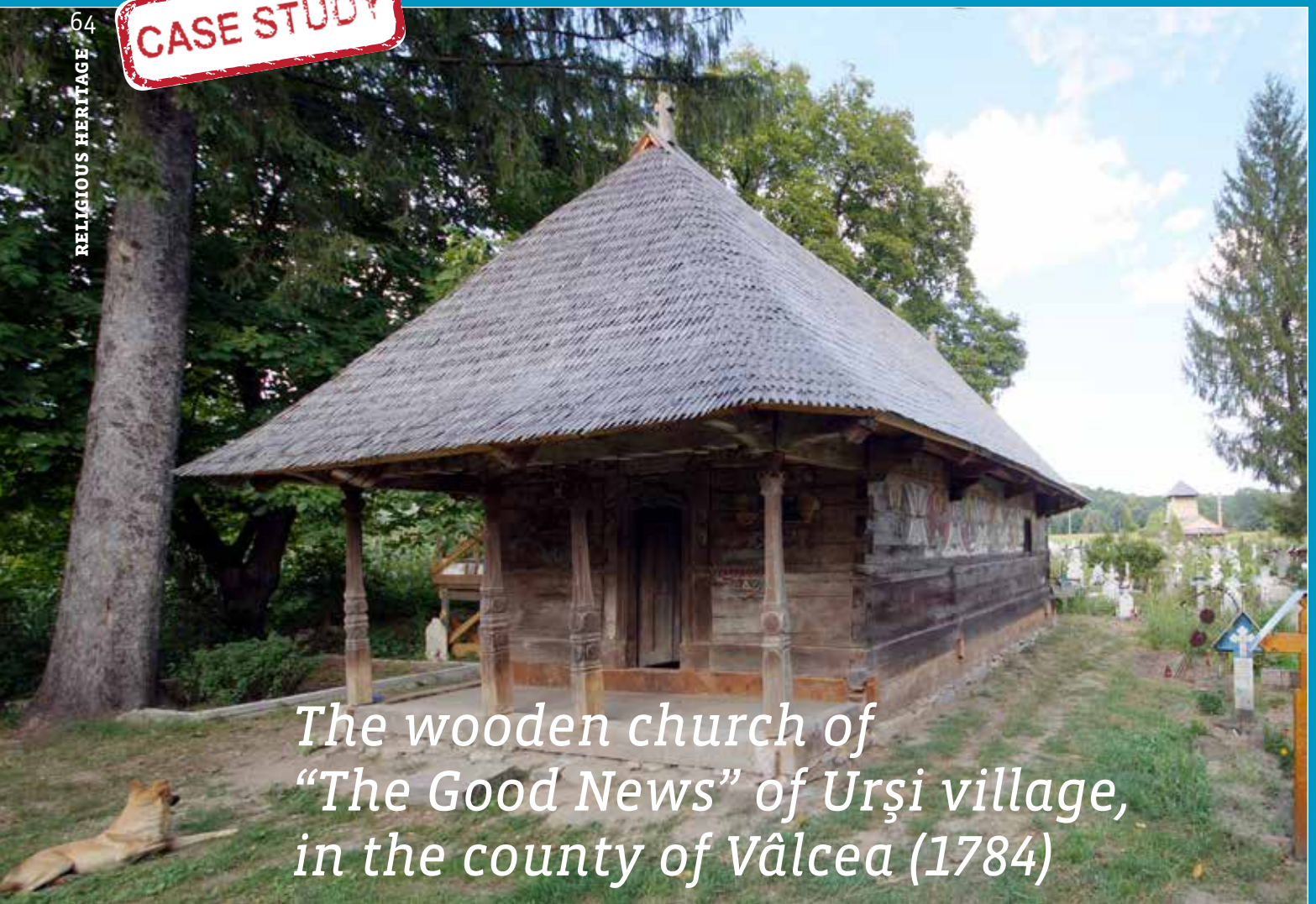
* The Pro Patrimonio Guide for Wooden Churches can be found here:

https://issuu.com/propatrimonio/docs/ghid_biserici_eng_issu

More information on the 7 Most Endangered mission can be found here:

<https://www.europanostra.org/europa-nostra-eib-institute-mission-visits-wooden-churches-romania/>

CASE STUDY



*The wooden church of
“The Good News” of Urși village,
in the county of Vâlcea (1784)*

The entrance of the
restored church in
Urși,

Pro Patrimonio, along with the help of their supporters and the French heritage crowdfunding organisation Dartagnans, recently managed to raise money to give a small wooden church in Urși a second life and salvage its splendid interior and exterior frescoes. A fire in 1838 destroyed this 18th-century church. Its frescoes were lovingly restored in 1843 both inside the church and on its exterior. In 1913, a new brick church was built, and the wooden church became a funerary chapel. The last repair was done in 1943, and since then, the church has slowly fallen into decay.

When restorations began, the little church was in bad shape. The roof was leaking, the altar’s ceiling had collapsed, and some of the stucco paintings had fallen off the walls. The original artists had used wood splinters to keep the images in place, literally nailed into the wall, to avoid them from being pulled apart when the wood would expand or contract in different weather conditions. But now some of the delicate frescos have fallen to the floor like a giant, intricate puzzle. They could have been very easily lost forever, but luckily nobody had come to sweep the floor for a long time. “It is painstakingly

delicate work,” explains restorer Ana Chiricuță. “For instance, we even used high-resolution photographs of the little cracks on the back of the paintings to find out where they belonged. It is a very time-consuming and precise work. And for us women to work in this part of the church, the chapel had to be temporarily deconsecrated.”

“Near the entrance of the church, you have a rare fresco which depicts the church itself. The church was built in the 18th century, but the paintings are from the 19th century, although they look older stylistically. On the opposite side, the faces

Rearview
of the Urși
churchInterior of the
Urși churchInscription above
the entrance of the
Urși churchPainting of the
Urși church on the
wall of the churchDetail of one of the
paintings on the
outside of the Urși
church

of Mary and baby Jesus had fallen off, and we recovered the fragments from the floor and put them back. In some parts of the church, we had to replace the wood. We would take the paintings off, put new wood, and put the paintings back on with a special elastic material to deal with the wood's warping. What is very special about this church is that it is also painted on the outside. This posed even more complicated conservation challenges, but it is a very worthwhile exercise. The original craftsmen even signed some of the paintings. We know them by name: Gerghe, Nicolae, and Ioan.”

The floor also looks new. “Yes, we had to secure the whole building and then lift it using jacks, like a car with a flat tire. We then were able to restore the floor and slowly lowered the entire church back on the foundation.”

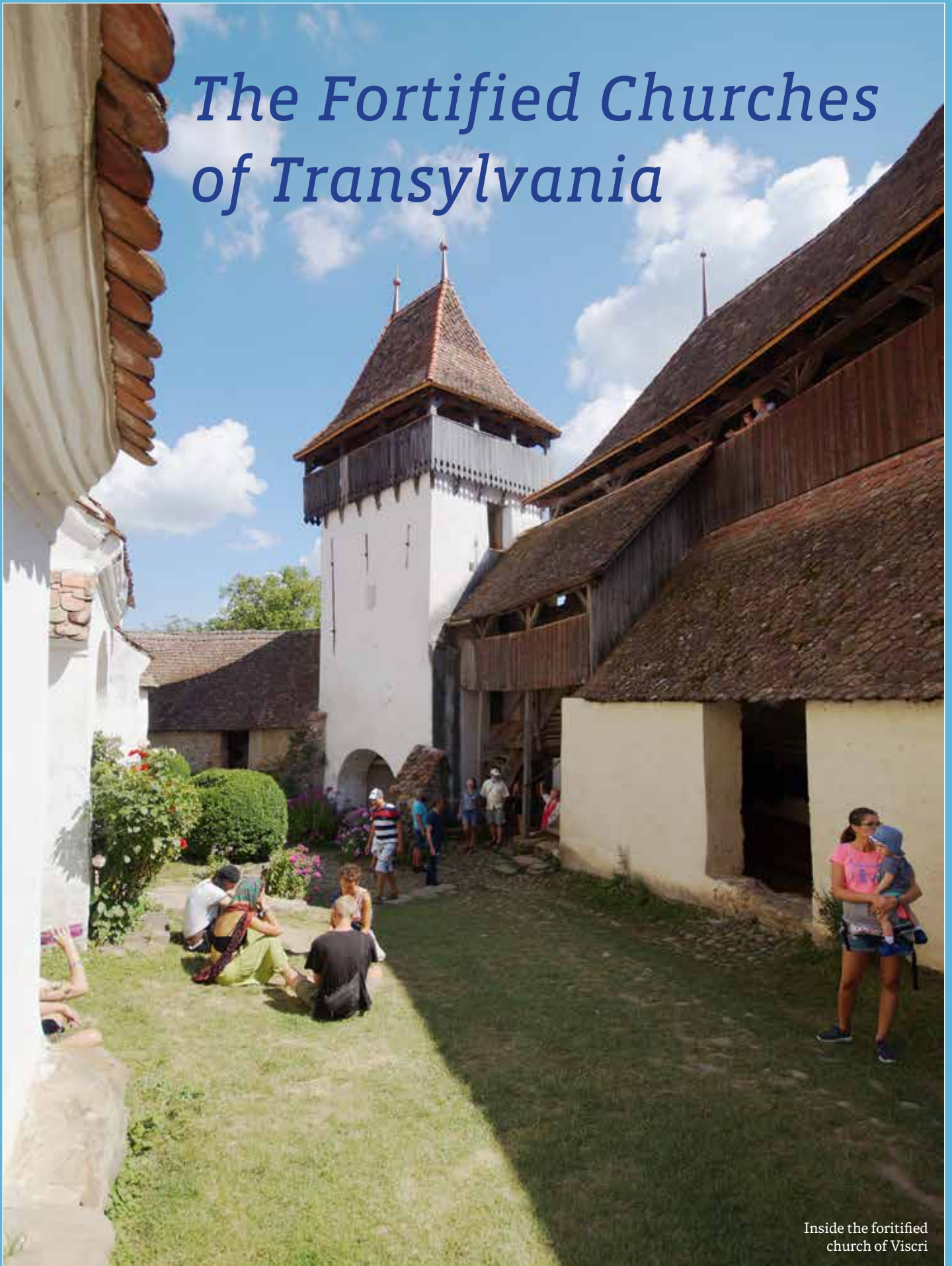
What is so extraordinary in the work of Pro Patrimonio and other heritage organisations across South East Europe is that the volunteers are often young professionals who have to work under challenging circumstances in a local community, which is sometimes suspicious of the work and its intentions. However, with every church and historic building

saved, essential elements are added to the regional development potential with long-term and lasting benefits to the local population.

The wooden church of the Urși is a beautiful treasure waiting to be discovered. It has now been almost completely restored and has reclaimed its place in the small village community.

In 2021, the restoration of the church won a European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award in the category Conservation. It also won one of the four Grand Prix and the Public Choice Award 2021: an extraordinary achievement.

The Fortified Churches of Transylvania



Inside the fortified church of Viscri

The walled church of Hosman

The atmosphere within the whitewashed walls of the Hosman fortified church could not be more peaceful. The outside world hardly penetrates this green oasis with birds twittering and bees buzzing. It has been centuries since potential invaders were threatening this small village in south-eastern Transylvania, and the imposing fortifications now protect tourists from the summer heat.



Transylvania's fortified churches are connected explicitly to the Saxons, mostly German-speaking immigrants from western Europe who settled in this part of Romania from the 12th century onward. The tight-knit communities of farmers, merchants, and artisans left a strong mark on this region, creating tangible and intangible heritage that lives on today. In late medieval times, defensive walls surrounded most European cities and towns. Here, however, the fortifications are centred around the village church. By the first sign of trouble, the Saxon families could withdraw into this safe and secure compound, complete

with storehouses and animal sheds. They are a unique combination of religious and defensive architecture.

Today, a few hundred of these fortifications remain: fairy-tale-like clusters of churches, imposing walls, and castle keeps in all shapes and sizes. Some are in better physical condition than others. Many are threatened by a lack of maintenance and financial support since most of the Transylvanian Saxons left Romania after the fall of communism. Seven of these villages are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites and have become beloved tourist destinations. For example, the

Inside the fortified church of Kleinschenk



The walls of Kleinschenk



The fortified church of Viscri



Viscri farms

residents of the photogenic village of Viscri have to deal with the challenges and opportunities of being on most visitors' 'bucket list' on a daily basis.

The little town has been on a rollercoaster of success and frustration. When the Saxons left in 1989, the village lost much of its population. In some cases the Roma had been gifted the Saxon houses, but these transactions were rarely written down officially. "When the Saxon families started to return after a few years and reclaimed their properties, it was not a pleasant experience," explains Cristian Radu.* Radu is a board member of the Mihai Eminescu Foundation (MET) – an organisation which has played a vital role in maintaining the traditional village over the past 20 years. The Trust has restored part of the walled church and at least 50 façades, barns, walls, and buildings in this beautifully intact village. The community has restaurants, a museum, and a coffeeshop but no general store or supermarket. One successful example is the very pleasant Blue House and Slow Food White Barn in a restored Saxon home, which serves a variety of traditional Transylvanian gastronomy with a modern twist.

Cristian Radu: "We have to protect the town's historic character and support and facilitate the local community. At the same time, we have to increase sustainable tourism and create new business opportunities. For instance, we have transformed some of the houses into bed & breakfasts.

You preserve the original structure but with new facilities such as a modern bathroom and decent heating. One of the major problems is the increased traffic and uncontrolled parking, which disturbs the peaceful atmosphere of the Romanian countryside. We are in the process of buying a neighbouring farm so we can create a new, larger parking facility outside the town.”

HRH Prince Charles has been a great supporter of the work in Viscri. He has even bought and restored a traditional Saxon house with a large wooden gate. His interest in the little rural community has been a blessing as well as a curse. House prices have skyrocketed. Radu: “This is a real estate bubble. If the authenticity disappears, we will be left with a museum village, and nobody wants that.”

The highlight of Viscri is the magnificent walled church with its charming whitewashed chapel and museum. Perched on a green hill at the end of one of the cobblestone streets, it is a surprisingly large ensemble of towers, storage rooms, stalls, and living quarters. Initially built in the 11th century by the Székely community, the Saxons took it over in the 12th century. If you climb to the top of the fortifications, you are treated to a magnificent panorama of the village and its surroundings. The partially covered space still holds the trunks in which the villagers would keep their valuables in times of need.

Although the future of Viscri is still not fully secured, many of



Traditional costume



Garden of the Blue House and Slow Food White Barn restaurant

the most challenging hurdles seem to have been overcome. Elsewhere in Transylvania, however, the future of the walled churches is less clear. In Hosman, for instance, rainwater has caused plaster damage on almost all the walls of the fortifications and the church. Over the years, restoration projects have been initiated by different charities and supporters to repair the roofs and the drains. In Cincsor, also known under its German name of Kleinschenk, the amazingly beautiful walled church is also struggling to generate sufficient resources. The fortified churches of south-eastern Transylvania are typical examples of the interconnectedness of Europe’s heritage and history. A greater collective effort should be made to save these extraordinary places for future generations.

*Cristian Radu is also the founder and manager of Experience Transylvania

(www.experiencetransylvania.ro) and works with local people from Viscri and other villages



B&B in Viscri



Saxon family chests in the fortified church of Viscri



The Church of St. George,
Shipcka (photo by K.
Kallamata)

The Post-Byzantine Churches in Voskopoja and Vithkuqi in Albania

Selected for the 7 Most Endangered list in 2018



The churches of the villages of Voskopoja and Vithkuqi were built to hide in plain sight. During the 17th and 18th centuries, when the region was still under Ottoman rule, these communities thrived as a crossroads between east

and west. Ideally located on the Via Egnatia, a road dating back to Roman times, the villagers traded wool and other valuable commodities with the Republic of Venice and other regional states. They used their prosperity to build church

after church, at least 24 in Voskopoja alone, all beautifully decorated with murals and icons and constructed with the best materials. However, they were made to look inconspicuous, discretely blending in with their natural environment, and without high towers so as not to offend the Ottoman leadership.

Over the years, the once populous and wealthy villages were raided and plundered and suffered from war damage and natural disasters. For instance, the monasteries of St. John

Monastery of Apostles Peter and Paul, Vithkuqi (photo by K. Kallamata

Derelict Church of St. Charalampus, Voskopoje



Interior of the Church of St. George, Shipcka (photo by K. Kallamata)

Interior of the Church of Prophet Elijah, Voskopojë (photo by K. Kallamata)

the Forerunner in Voskopoja and the Apostles Peter and Paul in Vithkuqi were bombed. The churches of St. Nicholas and the Dormition of the Virgin in Voskopoja were burned. Earthquakes in 1903, 1930, and 1960 have seriously affected the structural integrity of some of the churches. Of the many religious buildings, only a handful survive to this day. Many of them urgently need serious repair, far beyond the local communities' financial capacities. Nowadays, Voskopoja and Vithkuqi are small, sleepy villages with just a few thousand inhabitants. It is not easy to imagine when walking through these quiet



and peaceful streets that these agricultural communities were once centres of international trade with 25,000 inhabitants.

In 2018, a group of 12 churches, all masterpieces of the post-

Byzantine style, were selected for the 7 Most Endangered list. The churches' isolated location makes their conservation a challenge. The Christian population has seriously declined, and the churches

remain unused for most of the year. Visitors are few and far between, and finding a viable long-term solution is not an easy task. The nominating organisation, The Past for the Future Foundation, identified water damage and humidity as a severe threat to the interior wall paintings, especially in those churches which are missing roofs or windows. The colouration of some of these frescoes has been washed away by direct contact with rain and sunlight. Many of the mural paintings are detached from the walls and are ready to fall down. The theft of artifacts is an enduring problem as none of the churches are secured with cameras or alarms.

A sad example of the latter is the listed Church of Saint George in Shipcka, Voskopoja, which faces the immediate threat of theft due to a complete absence of security features. In 2011, this church was a winner of the Europa Nostra Award for its outstanding, holistic conservation, which received tremendous support from the local community. It highlights the urgency with which these remarkable churches need to be protected.

According to the 7 Most Endangered experts, the region has a great potential for cultural tourism and regional economic development, which would greatly benefit from the restoration of the churches and monasteries. The rich history of the region provides fertile ground for a revitalisation of the local communities.

IN MEMORIAM

Kliti Kallamata (1955-2020) **Council Member of Europa Nostra**

Europa Nostra grieves the loss of our dear colleague and friend Kliti Kallamata who died unexpectedly from Covid-19 on 28 December 2020 at the age of 65. Kliti was an expert on the conservation and restoration of historical monuments and sites and passionate about cultural heritage both in his home country, Albania, and in Europe. He was elected as new member of the Council of Europa Nostra by the General Assembly in October 2020.

In 2011, his conservation project of the Church of St. George in Shipcka in Albania won the Europa Nostra Award. Europa Nostra remains greatly indebted for Kliti Kallamata's commitment and expertise in our campaigns for endangered cultural heritage sites in Albania such as the amphitheatre in Durrës, the National Theatre of Albania in Tirana, and, in 2018, the post-Byzantine churches in Voskopoja and Vithkuqi in South-eastern Albania. Sadly, one of the churches under threat was the award-winning Church of St. George in Shipcka.

Europa Nostra will remember Kliti with great fondness and admiration for his achievements, his inspiration and lifelong dedication to the cause of cultural heritage.



Kliti Kallamata receiving the Europa Nostra Award in 2011 in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Netherlands (photo by Ruben Renaud)

Celebrating Success

*European Heritage / Europa Nostra Award
Winners 2020*

In the 2020 edition, two projects from South East Europe have won the highest European recognition for their work: Hvar's Arsenal in Croatia in the category of Conservation, and the Ambulance for Monuments from Romania in the category of Education, Training and Awareness-raising.

THE AMBULANCE FOR MONUMENTS

Travelling from restoration project to project with Eugen Vaida is a tour of discovery. The passionate conservation architect is proud of the intervention projects' success, the involvement of many young volunteers, and the much needed, heart-warming international support. In 2016, as one of the founders of Asociația Monumentum, he initiated the Ambulance for Monuments project, together with ARTTA (The Anglo-Romanian Trust for Traditional Architecture). The Ambulances carry tools, materials, and volunteers from one project to the next. The emergency intervention teams travel across Romania to save heritage sites and buildings. Other organisations have joined the initiative, such as Asociația Vernacular and Asociația Arhaic, and the network is still growing. The European Heritage/Europa Nostra Award 2020 will allow the initiative to conquer Europe. The reason is obvious. The method that Vaida has developed is not only necessary: it is working!



The old stone church of Apos, a new project of the Ambulance

One of the project's positive aspects is the enthusiasm it generates amongst young Romanians, who have stepped up to the plate to restore their heritage. The experts, students, and trained artisans all work voluntarily with local communities and authorities' support. They are re-shingling roofs, restoring foundations, securing delicate paintings, studying, learning, and teaching traditional techniques. Their enthusiasm is captivating and has convinced international sponsors to take an interest. One of their most ardent supporters is HRH Prince Charles, who has

been an active partner in the initiative.

With such strong support, it is no wonder Eugen Vaida feels he is on a winning streak. We have arrived in the small village of Apos in the middle of the Romanian countryside. Apos is a typical Saxon country community. Many Saxons, a German-speaking minority, left after the fall of communism, but now some have returned to Romania. Next to their large farmhouses, you can find smaller houses, built by the Roma villagers, *klein aber mein*, small but mine. In Apos, the



HRH Prince Charles and Eugen Vaida (with yellow helmet)

HRH Prince Charles recorded a special message when the award was announced: "I am enormously proud. To win such a prestigious award is an immense tribute to your splendid work, and I know only too well how well-deserved it is, as I have seen with my own eyes how much you have achieved. I think of all those beautiful wooden churches whose shingle roofs you have meticulously mended, thereby preserving the Byzantine paintings beneath, the water mills and medieval fortifications, Dacian ruins, and even village railway stations. Passing on this knowledge from one generation to the next is of vital importance. Romania has such an immensely rich architectural legacy. This is why I continue to do what I can to help preserve the extraordinary treasures that still exist in your country and form a unique part of Europe's cultural patrimony. I can only hope that ever more Romanians will come together to save this exceptional heritage for future generations."

The traditional
kiln in Apos
Creating the
tiles



Ambulance for Monuments is working on the restoration of a small stone church. Just outside the village, we visit a restored traditional tile kiln, which is now supplying the shingles for the roofs the organisation is repairing. A horse seems to be happily walking round and round in circles to mix the local clay with water. Inside the building, thousands of freshly made tiles are drying on rows of wooden shelves. The technique of how to form and bake these clay tiles is taught and shared in the kiln. Vaida proudly shows me one with Prince Charles' signature. Making a kiln work



Eugen Vaida

well is hard. The fire needs three days to warm up. You can bake tiles for three days, and then the ovens need to cool off for another four days. The tiles need to dry for three weeks in good weather. It is seasonal work,

so it is not easy to get trained people to commit.

Back on the road, Eugen Vaida explains that his main concerns in the many challenges faced by the Romanian heritage field





Ambulance for Monuments was created to save as much as possible in the most efficient way. The idea of an ambulance makes clear how urgent the interventions are, the need to rescue the ‘patients’ before it is too late.

Sf. Nicolae Church in Cuștelnic before restoration (photo by Țetcu Mircea Rareș)

Sf. Nicolae Church in Cuștelnic after restoration

Interior of the church in Cuștelnic with women and the devil

The entrance door of the church in Cuștelnic

The first church we visit is in Cuștelnic, situated just outside the village on a green slope. When we walk past the new church, we discover the original Sf. Nicolae Church, a tiny, fully restored building constructed out of two even smaller churches in the 1750s. When the much-needed restoration began, it was raining inside, and the painted walls were crumbling. Now the little wooden treasure is ready for the future. Around its lightbulb-shaped door, opened by what seems to be a foot-long iron key, we discover ancient symbols: representations of the sun, and wolf teeth, triangles scratched in the wood to ward off evil. Inside, a painting of women meeting the devil covers the wall. It’s not difficult to imagine the villagers huddled together by candlelight. Men and women sitting apart, listening to the priest’s sermon while outside the snow was falling during the harsh mountain winters.

are the small wooden churches. Many have been replaced by stone churches over the years, and now the often-tiny churches are abandoned, forgotten, and unloved. For much of the local population, especially the older

generations, these traditional churches are a symbol of the old Romania, which they would rather leave behind. These wooden treasures are seen as relics of a past that should be erased, not cherished. The

Interethnic Museum

The heritage interests of Eugen Vaida, the initiator of the Ambulance for Heritage project, go far beyond rescuing and restoration. He has a passion for preserving as much of the past as possible before it all disappears. Over the years, he and his family have built up an extensive collection, now housed in the Hârtibaciului Valley Interethnic Museum. With over 1,000 objects of Romanian, Saxon, Hungarian, and Roma origin, the museum, located in a restored historic farmhouse, shows how much these cultures have influenced one another.



Hârtibaciului Valley Interethnic Museum



Alex Ciobotă (on the right) with his team and local children

The wooden church, Crivina de Sus

This multidisciplinary project is part of the Wooden Churches in Banat, which has been running since 2013 at the initiative of the Romanian Landscape Association

Crivina de Sus is a tiny village in a lush green valley, literally at the end of the road. Nothing much happens in this country community, and it took some time before the local population was used to the young restorers and architects who set up camp next to the oldest wooden church in the region. The church was in desperate need of repairs. Over the years, architect Alex Ciobotă and his team have been ‘adopted’ by the local families. When we visited the site in 2019,

the work was still in progress. A large moveable tent was placed over the church to protect the vulnerable construction from the elements. Alex Ciobotă explained that the project is not only about restoring a church: “We started with making a moat around the church to help with the water drainage. We had to work and restore the foundation. We used a different method, so we are continuously monitoring the movement to make sure

we got it right. Restoring a community church like this is about much more than just a building. First, you need the right materials. You cannot make repairs without the right kind of oak trees. That means that you have to protect and sustain the surrounding forests as well. It is all interconnected. It wasn't easy to find the right trees as the woods' quality in this area has deteriorated. Secondly, you need to understand the skills involved



The church in Crivina de Sus during restoration

Another church in Crivina de Sus has also been fully restored

The church in Crivina de Sus during restoration

Interior restored church of Crivina de Sus

in restoring such a construction. This roof has four layers of shingles. A local carpenter is teaching his 52-year-old son-in-law how to do this. When you do this in the right way, the roof needs no further protection against the rain. The church used

to have paintings on the walls, but they were removed. However, we have found paintings on the back of some of the panels. One of the aspects that amazes visitors outside Romania is that the church does not have any windows, just small holes. This

was to protect the congregation against the bitter winter cold.”

In 2020, the church was fully restored to its former glory.

ambulanta-pentru-monumente.ro

Volunteers on
the roof of the
Biserica Sf.
Gheorghe



The young volunteers who are working on the Biserica Sf. Gheorghe in Streisângeorgiu seem to feel as much at home in the air as on the ground. If you do restorations for the Ambulance, you have to leave your fear of heights at the door. The volunteers are rhythmically replacing the shingles on the roof of this stone church, laughing and sharing jokes, while Vaida watches them like a proud father, standing next to his Ambulance truck.

The Ambulance
at Biserica Sf.
Gheorghe in
Streisângeorgiu



In the small village of Săliște Nouă, close to Cluj-Napoca, the volunteers are climbing the wooden church's tower with agility. It is already getting dark and cold when the work is done for the day, but the enthusiastic restorers give Vaida an update on the restorations. The intervention progresses according to plan, another 'patient' almost ready to rejoin the local community.

In 2019 and 2020, the Ambulances carried out more than 20 emergency projects across Romania. Now that the project has won international recognition, the organisation wants to export its unique method across the border, first to neighbouring countries facing many of the same problems, and then to the rest of Europe.

The Ambulance
at the church in
Săliște Nouă



Exterior of
the church in
Săliște Nouă

A volunteer
on the roof of
the church in
Săliște Nouă





HVAR'S ARSENAL

The Arsenal building is beautifully positioned in Hvar's old harbour, a historic city on the southwest side of the elongated island of the same name. Hvar is located just past Brač Island if you take the ferry from Split and is surrounded by the azure-coloured Adriatic Sea. The island has an impressively long history of trade and shipping. Hvar harbour is a compact collection of heritage treasures, complete with its 13th-century city walls, Renaissance cathedral, and hilltop fortress. The Arsenal's complex restoration, which took 30 years, completes the transformation of the seaside town.



Hvar Harbour during the restoration of the Arsenal (photo by F.G.Comm)

19th century postcard of Hvar

The restoration was so demanding because of its long history and unique location, which required intensive historical and technical research and archaeological excavations. It was no surprise that the foundations of the massive, rectangular building date back

to Roman times. Its current form is mostly from the 17th century. Over the centuries, the Arsenal was used in a variety of ways. As it is found on Hvarska Pjaca (Square of St. Stephen) in the very heart of a seaside town, the ground floor was used historically as a boatyard



The restored Arsenal in the evening

and a warehouse. After World War II, this huge arched space was transformed into a cinema and a hall for meetings and events. The upper floor had a completely different function with an 18th-century theatre,

galleries, and reception rooms.

After the restoration, the ground floor space has retained its original character with exposed stone walls and arches. Its vast scale provides Hvar's citizens

with a much-needed venue for cultural and social events. A communal store for cereals and salt now occupies a row of six rooms along the northern facade. On the upper floors, the original Venetian wooden



beams have been restored, and the charming theatre boxes have been brought back to their original splendour. The necessary new additions to the building fit perfectly with its historical elements and

successfully evoke a dramatic meeting of old and new.

The project was funded by the Hvar municipality, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Regional Development, and

Split – Dalmatia County with additional funds coming from civil associations and the European Regional Development Fund.

www.hvar.hr

The theatre during restoration

The theatre after restoration

The ground floor of the Arsenal after restoration

Winners European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2021





2021 was a year in which South East Europe was very well represented in every award category of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards

Plaka Bridge (photos courtesy of the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports)

CATEGORY CONSERVATION

The Plaka Bridge in Epirus (Greece) is a single arch bridge which was built in the 19th century. The bridge collapsed during a storm in 2015 and has been fully restored to its former beauty using as many of the original, fallen fragments as possible.

The Wooden Church of Urși Village in Vâlcea County (Romania) with its remarkable painted decorations has been secured thanks to the local community and an interdisciplinary and international cooperation. (see also the article *New Life For Old Churches* in this magazine)

CATEGORY RESEARCH

FIBRANET – FIBRes in ANcient European Textiles is a project from Denmark and Greece in which the fibres from

The Wooden Church of Urși Village, Romania (photo by Camil Iamandescu)



European textiles, dating from prehistory to the Roman Empire, were investigated. The freely accessible database provides information on diverse textile fibres and will stimulate further research and international collaboration.

Control Shift – European Industrial Heritage Reuse in Review is the result of a cooperation between Greece and The Netherlands. The research provides a much-needed alternative framework for the conservation of industrial heritage.

CATEGORY DEDICATED SERVICE

The Gjirokastra Foundation from Albania has worked tirelessly to safeguard the historical centre of the UNESCO-listed city of

Gjirokastra Foundation, Albania (photo courtesy of the Gjirokastra Foundation)



Gjirokastra. The Foundation has supported the revitalisation of its historic centre through the introduction of the best principles of safe-guarding and with a community centered approach. (see also the article *Unity in Diversity?* in this magazine)

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage (TCCH) from Cyprus was established in 2008. It is equally composed of representatives of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. The TCCH has successfully restored and conserved more than 70 monuments.

A restoration crew of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage (TCCH), Cyprus (photo courtesy of TCCH)



workshops, exhibitions and products such as games and self-learning books engaging new audiences with the intangible cultural heritage of Bulgaria and showing surprising links between the dances and natural patterns. During the announcement of the 2021 winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards on 25 May 2021, performers connected to the project enthusiastically demonstrated a Bulgarian dance.

Their work centres cultural heritage as a powerful tool for peaceful cooperation and for the creation of a climate of reconciliation. (see also the article *Bridging The Divide* in this magazine)

CATEGORY EDUCATION, TRAINING AND AWARENESS-RAISING

Following in the Steps of Bulgarian Folklore from Bulgaria. The Taratanci Foundation presents Bulgarian folklore to a contemporary public in new ways through

Heritage Hubs is a cooperation between Finland, Italy, Spain and Serbia. The project brought together young people aged 10 to 16 years old to explore, present and share their cultural heritage. Exchange visits and an e-learning platform were set up for this purpose.





Bridging The Divide

Right through the heart of the capital city Nicosia and straight across Cyprus lies a deep cut, an open wound dividing communities and even families. It's coming close to 50 years now that the relatively small Mediterranean island was divided into two parts, three even, if you count the British Overseas Territories which are a sort of Cypriot Gibraltar.



Even before the situation got out of hand during the conflict of 1974, there had been years of increased tensions between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, in part stoked by the ethnic polarisation of the British colonial rule after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. In the aftermath of the Turkish invasions of 1974 and the continued alternations of hostilities and agreements, the

island was slowly but surely torn apart. The United Nations Buffer Zone in Cyprus (the Green Line) and the Nicosia Buffer Zone became the sad, dividing symbols of how a sustainable peaceful solution for Cyprus remains elusive. Permanent peace in Cyprus has become a Holy Grail of international diplomatic negotiations and many world leaders and organisations have tried to forge a solution.



Sometimes the different sides come close to a long-lasting resolution, but just as often the talks collapse at the last moment. Despite the continued efforts to bring both sides together, other forces made the trenches deeper and accentuated the differences. In 1983, the northern part of the island was unilaterally declared as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is only recognised by Turkey. In 2004, the southern part of the island, the Republic of Cyprus, joined the European Union. The UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus) has been safeguarding the fragile relations since 1964. The organisation employs more than 1,000 people at a price of 55 million dollars a year, a great part of which is paid by the Republic of Cyprus.

One of the many victims of the continuously tense and unresolved situation is Cyprus' rich cultural heritage. Artefacts have been destroyed or looted,

monuments have been defaced and left derelict. For instance, the famous Walled City of Famagusta, a town located on the east coast, continues to be under threat. Fortunately, some of its most impressive buildings have been restored by the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage (TCCH). The Committee was created in 2008 to support the Cyprus peace process by promoting and protecting Cyprus' heritage. Through the TCCH projects, dozens of archaeologists, architects, engineers, art historians and town planners from both communities have been working together to preserve the island's cultural heritage. In 2021, the TCCH received the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award for Dedicated Service.

Another example of cultural heritage under threat is the Nicosia Buffer Zone in the very centre of the city, once a focal point of craft and

trade. The historic district is now a lifeless corridor of 1.5 kilometres, its beautiful medieval monuments and elegant neoclassical buildings and traditional workshops all but ruined. Europa Nostra strongly believes that the collective restoration and preservation of this endangered heritage site can help communities to come closer together. In 2013, the organisation identified the Buffer Zone as one of the 7 Most Endangered heritage sites in Europe.

The nomination drew attention to the area's cultural, social, and economic potential, which could help bring healing to the island. However, progress has been slow and there is grave concern about the deterioration which continues and even accelerates. The condition of St. George's Church and St. James' Church is particularly alarming.

Fortunately, there is also hope, including the opening of two

Bufferzone
(photos by Roman Robroek)

*The nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' was made by the Cyprus Architectural Heritage Organisation. For the latest heritage initiatives in Cyprus you can also check out the website of country representative Europa Nostra Cyprus at europanostracyprus.org



The medieval church of St. James (Agios Iakovos) in the Buffer Zone, before and after its collapse

additional crossings through the corridor. Europa Nostra also feels encouraged by initiatives developed by civil society organisations (such as Home for Cooperation and the Centre for Visual Arts and Research), which promote the shared cultural heritage of Cyprus by developing creative bi-communal activities. Restoring and revitalising the historic heart of Nicosia will help to build a more peaceful and prosperous future in Cyprus and in Europe as a whole.



Heritage-led diplomacy is an important part of the solution but much more is needed to break the deadlock after decades of failed attempts at reconciliation and peace. Can time perhaps heal all wounds? Europa Nostra's Vice-President Androulla Vassiliou comes from Cyprus and is the former European Commissioner of Health, and European Commissioner of Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth. She believes that finding the right answer is not just a matter of time, of unity of purpose and a common goal: it is also a matter of the heart.

“I would say, it is not a question of time so much, but it is a question of realising what is the right opportunity and to grasp it. To solve the Cyprus question will have important political repercussions. We are part of the European Union. And if a part of the European Union is bleeding, peace in the whole of the Union is affected. We also live in a region which is very volatile. You see what is happening in the Middle East, there has never been real peace in this part of the world. If we have peace in Cyprus, it will be a very good beginning for the region, a step to a wider peace process. Cyprus can play a key role.”

Maqam En Nabi Musa, Palestine



UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)

Over the years, the commitment of the UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus) to the preservation and protection of cultural heritage has been instrumental to the progress, however slow, made in Cyprus. Elsewhere in the world, the United Nations – through the UNDP – also puts cultural heritage high on its agenda. Europa Nostra strongly supports heritage-led diplomacy and believes that the protection and restoration of heritage is a powerful tool in bringing communities back together and

starting a process of healing. For those reasons, Europa Nostra was involved in the Maqam En Nabi Musa historic site in the Holy Land in Palestine in 2019.

Palestinian Prime Minister H.E. Mohammad Shtayyeh inaugurated the restored historical site, in the presence of national and local dignitaries, as well as representatives of the European Union, UNDP, diplomats, and local communities. Executive Vice-President Guy Clause was invited to represent Europa Nostra at this ceremony.



Vassiliou realises that a lot needs to be done to start healing and bringing the different communities together.

“We are trying to encourage the young generations to be involved. Because it was the older generations who did this. We are trying to involve more and more young people who have never experienced living together because they were born after separation. So, for them, it is their enemy on the other side. So you have to convince them that they are not enemies, that they are part of us.”

I had the same experience many years ago when I participated in some conflict resolution seminars. At the time they were held abroad, because we were not allowed to cross over to the other side. So, they were some seminars organised and we had to travel abroad in order to meet with our ‘enemies’. So, my first encounter with Turkish Cypriot women was in Brussels. We were called the Brussels Group. We were about forty women from both sides. And it was the first time that we met women of the other side. And we spent three days together, telling our stories, crying, cursing, getting angry, and then creating

friendships. These friendships last until today, I meet some of these women still, and we embrace, and we kiss, and we eat together. And we remember that experience. For example, the truth committees that were created in different countries in Africa are very important. Because you can express your anger, and then you may be ready to open up your heart. A lot of people on both sides have their own stories and their own frustrations and their hate. That needs to get out of the way before you can find any form of solution.”

Nicosia Airport

Maqam En Nabi Musa, close to Jericho, is a historic site dating back to the 13th-century. Its historic importance, however, extends back much further. According to Islamic belief, Nabi Musa is the burial place of Moses.

The European Union has teamed up with the UNDP and the Palestinian authorities to restore and modernise the site, taking into account its religious nature. The cooperation between the EU and the UNDP has also proven fruitful in other countries, for example

in Nicosia and Famagusta in Cyprus. Where appropriate, the expertise of Europa Nostra’s members is much welcomed. For instance, the technical implementation of the Maqam En Nabi Musa restoration benefitted from the expertise and active advice of Paolo Vitti, an architect specialised in archaeology and historical restorations and Board Member of Europa Nostra, and of Pavlos Chatzigrigoriou, Digital Heritage Expert and Council Member of Europa Nostra.



Pavlos Chatzigrigoriou at the UNDP meeting



Despite almost fifty years of divisions, the local community today seems more united than ever in wanting to reclaim their city centre and their shared cultural heritage. Although a quick and clean solution will probably not present itself, the gradual and slow advancement, helped by the restoration and preservation of heritage sites which fell victim to the separation, will bring a better and hopefully united future for Cyprus and the region as a whole. Creating better cooperation through cultural heritage is of vital importance but steps also need to be taken in other fields.

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage (TCCH) is just one of the bi-communal Committees that are forging a better future for the island. Others are, for instance, working on environment, education and health. The Committee on Culture was established in 2015 and is co-chaired by Europa Nostra's Vice-President Androulla Vassiliou. It helps bridging differences by bringing



the two communities closer together through culture. The many activities which were organised over the years brought together thousands of people from all across Cyprus. Its success culminated in 2019 when 219 works of art belonging to Greek Cypriots were returned. They were found in the occupied city of Famagusta, were

preserved by the Turkish Cypriot members of the Committee and eventually returned to the Greek Cypriot owners. In return, the Greek Cypriots shared, in digital form, the part of the register of the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation which refers to Turkish Cypriot actors, journalists and politicians from the period before the separation. In February 2020, a large exhibition was organised by the Committee at the Ledra Palace Hotel in the Buffer Zone of Nicosia combining the photos and other documentation from the Cyprus Broadcasting Cooperation with the returned valuable works of art. The exhibition was inaugurated by President Anastasiades and the then Turkish Cypriot leader *Mustafa Akıncı*. The works of art were eventually returned to their rightful owners. Step by step, year by year, the bi-communal Committee on Culture together with all the other Committees bring the people of Cyprus closer together and bridging the divide that still separates them.



(left to right) Androulla Vassiliou (Vice-President of Europa Nostra) Costas Severis, Rita C. Severis, Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović (Secretary General of Europa Nostra) in the Centre of Visual Arts and Research (CVAR)

Over the years, the juries of the European Heritage Awards selected many initiatives from Cyprus. Besides more traditional awards for restorations such as the Omeriye Ottoman Baths and the Armenian Church and Monastery, both in Nicosia, three awards were given to projects with a direct connection to the peace process in Cyprus.

Home for Cooperation: educational centre in the buffer zone of Nicosia
(Award winner 2014)

Accessible from both sides of the Buffer Zone without having to cross checkpoints, this once neglected building now provides a shared space that can be used by all. It is an initiative of the inter-communal organisation Association of Historical Dialogue and Research. The restored building from the 1950s is named the Home for Cooperation, dedicated to education and training, and the advancement of research and dialogue. Its promoters describe the project as ‘the empowerment of our competence as critical thinkers and citizens of Cyprus, Europe, and the world.’

The Centre of Visual Arts and Research (Grand Prix Award Winner 2017)

For over 25 years, Costas and Rita Severis have amassed a rich and complete collection of visual representations of Cyprus from the 18th to the 20th century as seen by European artists. The works of art, photographs, and historical objects and clothing promote Cypriot cultural heritage within a framework of peaceful coexistence. In 2014, this remarkable collection found a home in a renovated flour mill right in the historic centre of divided Nicosia. The Centre of Visual Arts and Research is comprised of a museum which spans four floors and houses over 1,500 paintings of Cyprus, depicting its Greek and Turkish communities living together in peace, over 500 costumes and textile artefacts, and various memorabilia. A research centre is found alongside the museum and is home to thousands of books and photographs concerning history, art and travel in Cyprus.

The Centre demonstrates that, for centuries, the two communities lived peacefully together, irrespective of religion and culture, thus emphasising what unites rather than what divides the people of Cyprus. This is achieved by organising and hosting a multitude

of events such as exhibitions, lectures, seminars and study tours.

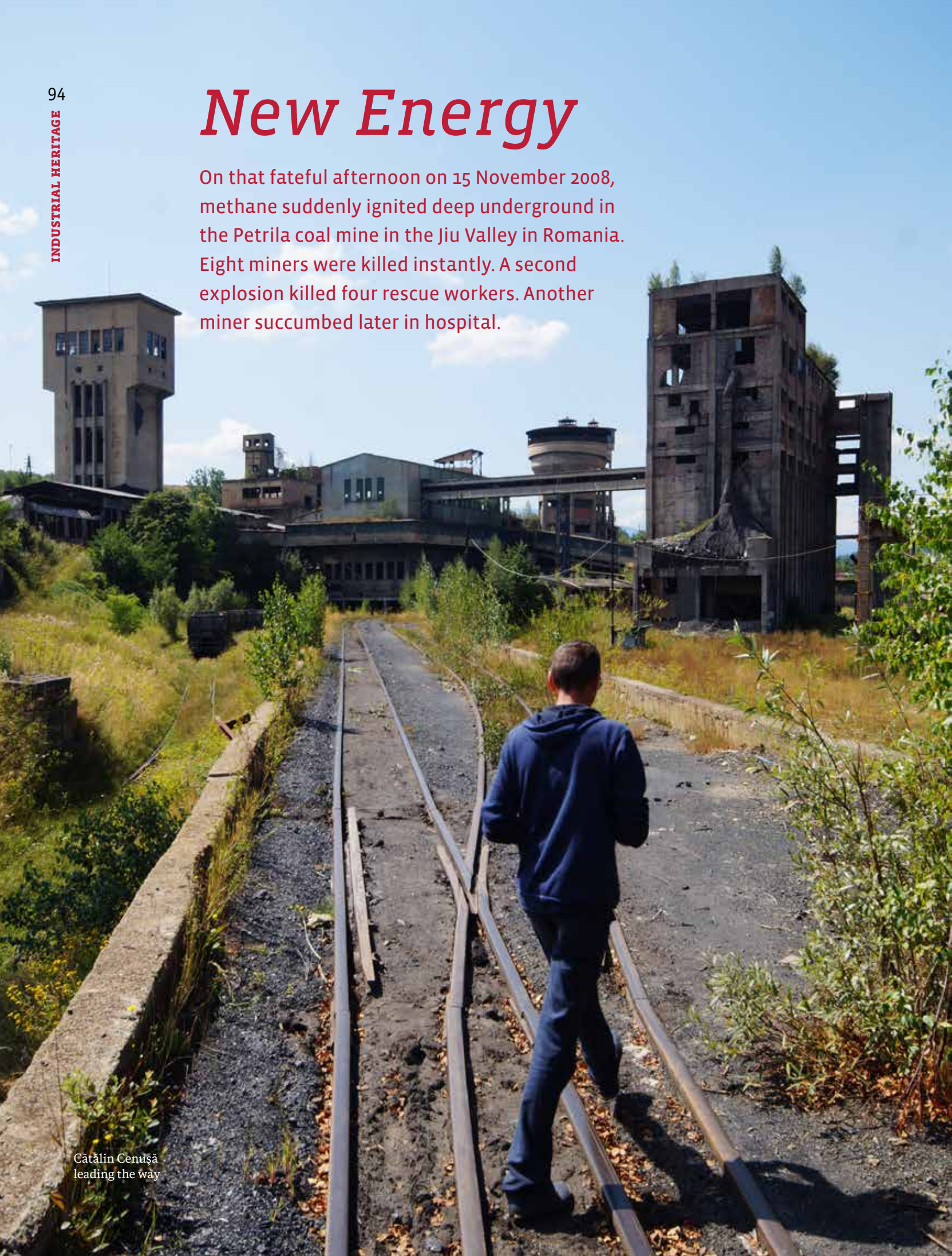
The renovation was made possible with help from USAID, EEA & Norway Grants, UNDP-ACT and the De Minimis programme.

The Architectural Heritage of the Buffer Zone in the Walled City of Nicosia (Grand Prix Award Winner 2011)

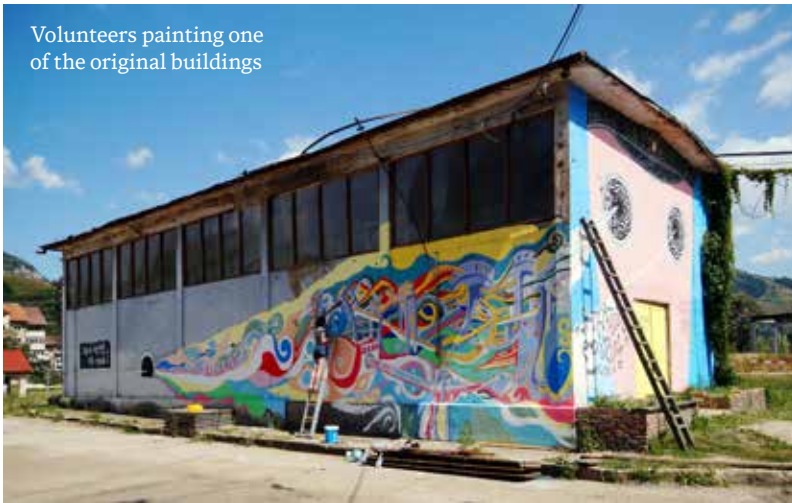
The study of the architectural heritage within the UN protected buffer zone of Nicosia was implemented within the framework of the bi-communal Nicosia Master Plan Project (NMP). The NMP was launched in 1980 as a collaboration between the two major communities of Nicosia, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, for the development of Nicosia as a whole and the revitalisation of the city. Many problems had to be overcome in carrying out the work, which involved scientists and other workers from both communities. The overall result includes historical analyses, surveys of buildings and public spaces, studies for emergency support and restoration proposals, and an enormous digital record used as a database for future projects. This project enables the conservation of the architectural heritage within the buffer zone and the revitalisation of the historic centre of Nicosia as a whole.

New Energy

On that fateful afternoon on 15 November 2008, methane suddenly ignited deep underground in the Petrila coal mine in the Jiu Valley in Romania. Eight miners were killed instantly. A second explosion killed four rescue workers. Another miner succumbed later in hospital.



Volunteers painting one of the original buildings



Office building

The disaster has left deep emotional scars in the community. Retired miner Cătălin Cenușă swallows hard as he points at the helmets of the victims hanging on the walls of the small museum. The 2008 mining disaster is one of the many stories of the Petrila mine, stories he wants to preserve for posterity.

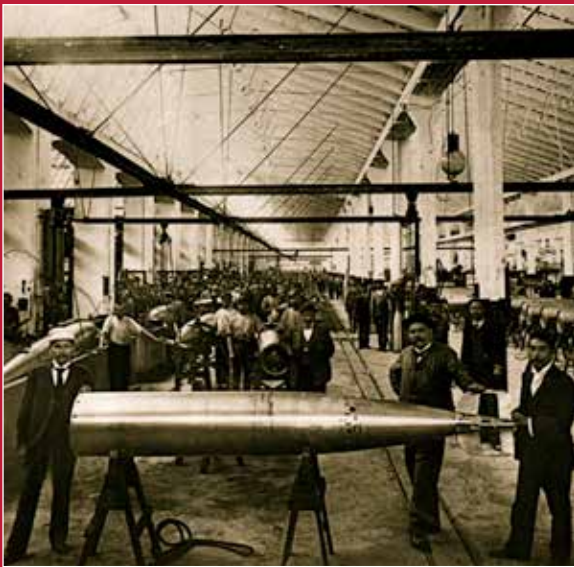
Cenușă is a man with a mission. When the mine closed in 2015, he was one of the last to leave, closing the offices and locker rooms to make sure they were safe, and nothing could be taken out. Cenușă was not the only one who thought that Petrila should be more than just another closed coal mine. At the initiative of famous artist and cartoonist Ion Barbu, members of the local community and a group of architects came together to make sure that the immense industrial heritage site could be saved for future generations. The grassroots movement quickly grew in strength and became one of the largest participatory projects ever to be carried out in Romania. The Planeta Petrila Association was founded to keep the spirit of Petrila alive, bringing together



the local administration, civil society organisations, former miners, architects and urban planners.

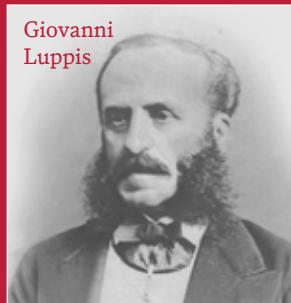
Petrila was one of the largest mines in Romania. It still has deposits of more than 16.5 million tons of coal. It is, however, not profitable enough to keep the mine open. Cenușă lights another cigarette while he explains how and why he got involved. The idea that

something which had been so important in so many lives over such a long period of time could just close and be forgotten was unbearable to him. He worked for more than 20 years in the mines. It was hard but honest work, and you get used to the hardship. You even could enjoy it. At 45, he got his pension. Since then, he can be found most days at the almost abandoned mine. There is still a remnant of activity as trains come in



The Torpedo Factory in Rijeka, Croatia

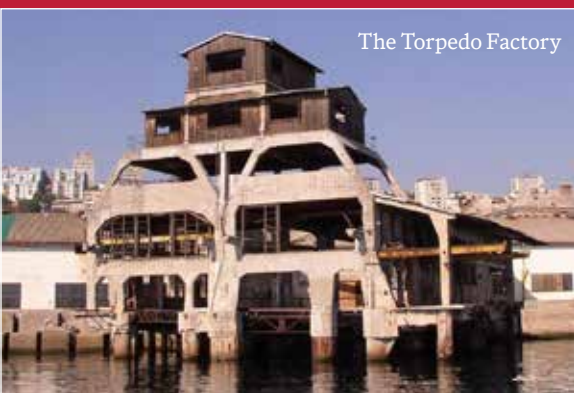
It started with the idea of a small, self-propelled boat full of explosives that could be used to attack ships. Giovanni Luppis, an officer in the Austro-Hungarian Navy, was working on the idea but could not make it work until he met Robert Whitehead, the director of the Rijeka Technical Institute. After some trial and error, Whitehead believed that it would be more successful if the boat could attack under the waterline, and the world's very first torpedo was born. The R. Whitehead & Co. Torpedo Factory was officially founded in 1875 and over the almost one hundred years that followed, the company manufactured tens of thousands of underwater missiles, launching tubes, and compressors. It turned Rijeka into the torpedo capital of the world.



Giovanni Luppis

For many years now, the Torpedo factory has lain empty, and its rusty derelict exterior and crumbling launching and testing station are a magnet for photographers.

Recently, supported by the European Regional Development Fund, 1,500 square metres of this huge industrial heritage complex in the harbour of Rijeka have been transformed into the Torpedo Production Park, a technological, educational, and entrepreneurial incubator with new businesses, laboratories, and industrial innovators.



The Torpedo Factory



Shower room

from Lonea, a coal mine three kilometres away which is still in operation.

Petrila was always much more than just a mine: it was a mini-city with its own repair shops for lamps and equipment and medical facilities. There was a training school with a real mine shaft complete with an iron cart on rails – on a slightly larger-than-life scale, to not scare anyone off. Many of the office buildings look in good shape with period art depicting heroic miners working for the good of the country. At the time, 4,500 people worked here. The bosses, visitors, electricians, miners, and combustion experts all wore different coloured hardhats so

you could see who's who from a distance.

The training classrooms are frozen in time. Optimistic posters which seem to date back to communist times are alternated with maps and drawings of the kilometre deep mine. The empty wooden desks and chairs appear to wait for students to return from their coffee break. The atmosphere is more reminiscent of the 1970s than of the 2010s, the time when the mine was closed. Abandonment can quickly age equipment and buildings, especially if there are no funds to keep them in good order. Cenuşă explains that some of the rusty mining towers that



Changing room



Mine entrance building

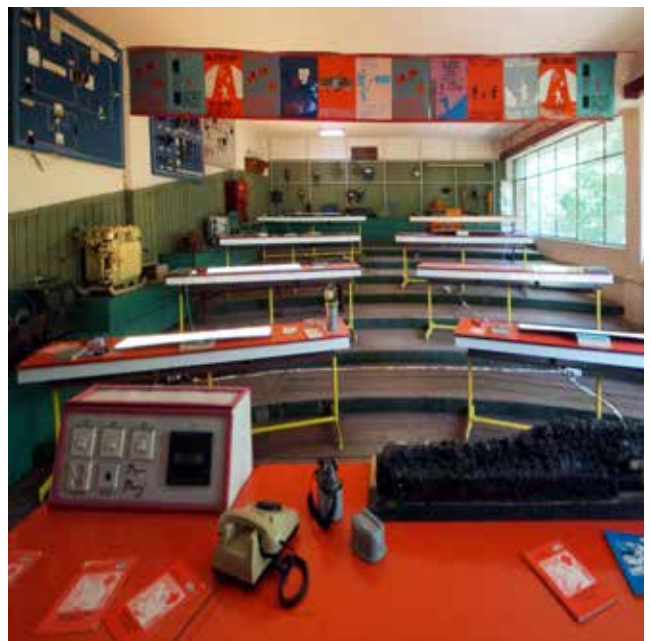
look like they were built in the 1950s are just twenty years old.

It is a fascinating journey of discovery to walk through the empty halls that seem to have been made for giants. A ghost town with empty changing rooms with hundreds of rusty showers and rows of lockers covered in dust. Part of a roof has collapsed due to heavy snowfall. To avoid accidents, the entrance to the mine and the lift that used to transport 25 people down are now cast in concrete. Between the buildings, the grass grows high. It is easy to miss the original 19th-century entrance to the mine.

The mine is still state-owned.

It was for sale for €80,000, but the budget was too high for the municipality to take over Petrila. The Planeta Petrila Association was even contemplating crowdfunding as a possible solution to the problem. The county administration did express their interest in the site but the process could not gain enough steam.

In the meantime, as a sustainable solution is not forthcoming any time soon, Cenușă and a group of volunteers keep the site going as best they can. In 2016, the Petrila Mine was finally recognised as a Class A Historical Monument. The site is now protected from demolition



Classroom

but if the property issues are not solved and without proper consolidation and restoration, the dangers to the site continue.



The site is so big that it is hard for the enthusiastic volunteers not to feel overwhelmed by the daunting tasks ahead. Cătălin Cenușă is very pragmatic and takes on the challenges one at a time.

The first building they reused, back in 2014, was a small rectangular building close to the entrance; the former Pump House, now the Pompadou Center. The most recent reused building is the Rescuer's Museum, in the former mine clinic, the heart of Cenușă's activities. Besides the museum and the museum shop, they now give tours to raise additional funds. It is hard to interest the

old mining community of the Jiu Valley to get actively involved, but luckily many young volunteers are trying to help save Petrița. In one of the old depots, students are getting ready for an online activity. Elsewhere, volunteers are painting one of the buildings. The historical photographs of the mining community have been digitised and made accessible online. Another exciting promotional project is a documentary film, directed by Andrei Dăscălescu, an honorary member of the Planeta Petrița Association. Planeta Petrița tells the story of the mine and the miners and brings together the people who believe in its bright future.

If the Planeta Petrița Association manages to make the site a success, the local community will not only prosper once again, but the mine would also become an international example on how to give these kinds of industrial heritage sites new energy. South East Europe has thousands of abandoned factories and industrial compounds which need activists like Cenușă and his team of volunteers to be reimagined and transformed. Forging a new future for these industrial heritage sites will bring the hope of new business, new jobs, and a better life.

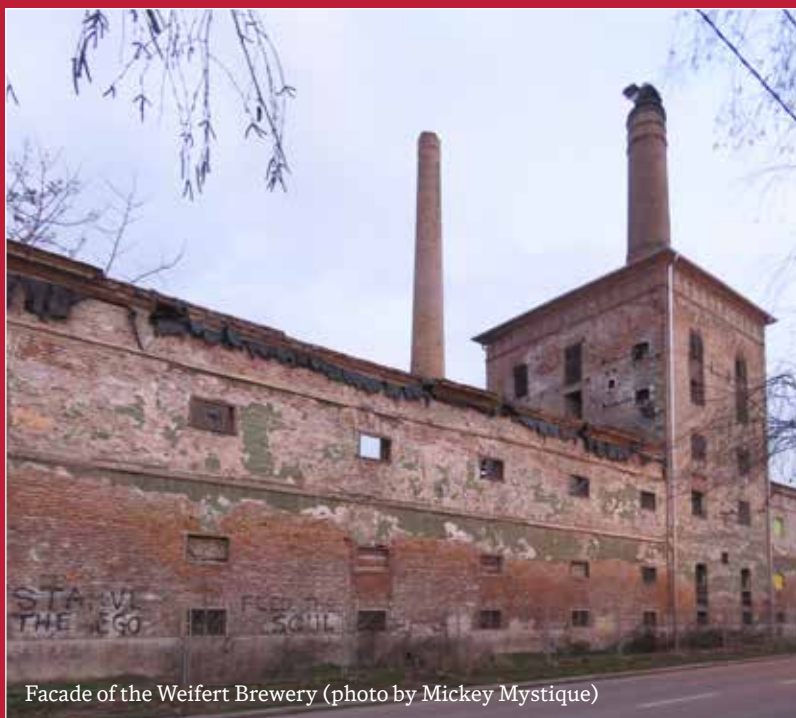
The Georg Weifert's Brewery in Pančevo, Serbia

The brewery, located not far from Belgrad in Pančevo, is another huge industrial complex from the 19th century. Đorđe Vajfert or Georg Weifert was one of Serbia's (and later Yugoslavia's) richest and most successful entrepreneurs. Following his father Ignatz' footsteps, Georg Weifert made a fortune by brewing beer, which had a long and proud history in Pančevo. For more than a century the brewery was owned by the family. In 1946, the company was nationalised and soon thereafter the historical significance of the buildings was recognised by granting them monumental status. The beer kept flowing from the Georg Weifert brewery until the late seventies. Production was then moved to other locations in town until, in 2008, all breweries in Pančevo closed. The old Georg Weifert industrial complex was used for other activities until the 2010s.

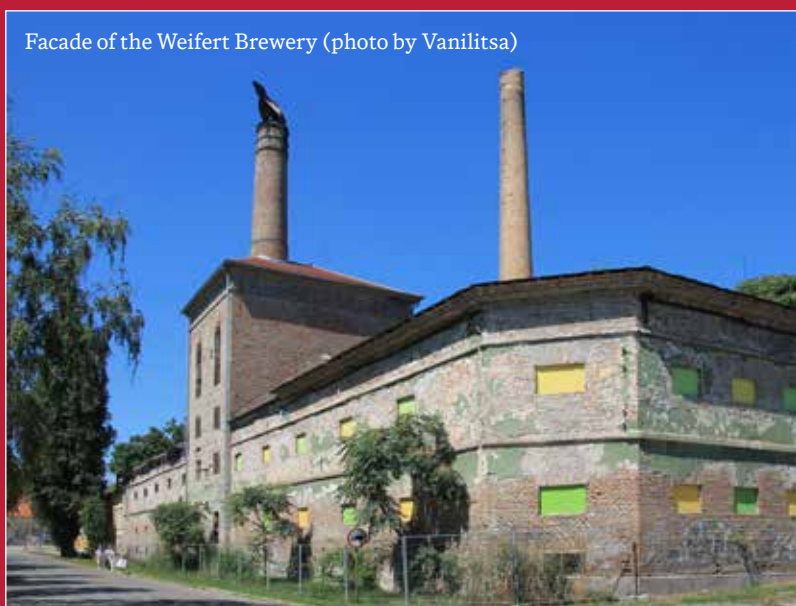
By 2014, most of the industrial heritage site was in a bad shape. Once again, the question of how to create a sustainable future for such a large and historically significant site had to be answered and answered quickly. The municipality challenged the community to come up with an attractive and economically viable solution. A team from Europa Nostra Serbia participated, and their detailed proposal for a careful reconstruction and revitalisation was much appreciated and managed to get into the top five.

In 2016, the German Ambassador Axel Dittmann opened the Brewery Museum Georg Weifert in the partially restored tower of the brewery complex. For Siniša Janković of the Association of Citizens Georg Weifert Brewery Museum, it is not enough: *"It is our wish that by 2022 the whole complex of the old brewery will be revitalised."* If that is possible, the future will tell. The COVID-19 crisis may have made that already ambitious plan even more challenging.

The United Serbian Breweries still make a Weifert beer.



Facade of the Weifert Brewery (photo by Mickey Mystique)



Facade of the Weifert Brewery (photo by Vanilitsa)



Opening of a museum on the site in 2016

The Future of Tourism

An interview with Costa Carras (1938-2022)



Costa and Lydia Carras

Costa Carras was a scholar, businessman, environmentalist, collector, legendary heritage activist, and was for almost 50 years Vice President and Council Member of Europa Nostra. Together with his wife, Lydia Carras, in 1972 he founded Elliniki Etairia as a Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage, today the active and dedicated country representative for Europa Nostra in Greece. He passed away on 28 February 2022.

“We were concerned with cultural heritage and simultaneously with environmental problems. At the time, there was no organisation for that in Greece. So, we set up such an organisation; it was that simple. The event that set it off was the destruction of the beautiful Venetian late Gothic church of the Saviour in Heraklion, Crete. It was a well-known, listed monument. One of the dictators at the time was from Crete. He loathed this monument. He gave orders to knock it down. The reason given was that it was in bad condition, while in fact, it was in such good condition that they had to dynamite it. What did he build on the site afterward: a parking lot! This was an absolute scandal, as you can well understand. We and friends of ours decided we cannot accept this kind of destruction anymore. We must do something about it. And we did by founding Elliniki Etairia.”



As is immediately clear from that statement, Costa Carras was not someone to sit back and let the world pass by. Whenever action was needed, in his home country Greece or around the world, he stepped up to the plate. One of the most urgent issues of the 21st century is the uncontrolled development of mass tourism. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the travel industry, its long-term effects are unclear. It is anybody's guess if the underlying trends are temporarily halted or fundamentally changed. However, some form of mass tourism will return, and its consequences will continue to influence heritage sites and cities across Europe. As Greece is one of Europe's most beloved destinations, its future will undoubtedly be determined by tourism.

“In many cities in Europe - Venice, Rome, Barcelona, Amsterdam, also Athens - the tourism pressure is too high. This is, how shall I put it, an existential falling away. Instead of living a life that gives value

to quality, you live a life that gives value only to the amount of money you can make and the number of visitors you can squeeze in. To provide you with an example, we have been entrusted with studying the carrying capacity of the island of Santorini. It is self-evident that the island cannot carry the number of tourists it has received over the last few years. So naturally, we are firmly against it, but we appreciate there are many people who will not listen to our recommendations. They have a vested interest in not listening to it. The island of Mykonos is, in one way, a

worst-case scenario because the destruction has gone further. The traditional villages have survived because the Archaeological Service preserved them. However, just a few meters away, a concrete jungle of apartment buildings starts, which, like a white fungus, has spread over the rest of the island. It was bound to happen that some islands would have to be sacrificed simply because the phenomenon of tourism growth was so rapid. It was fed by the real demand from Western Europe and the supply by the hotel owners, the bar owners, and all the various other people. Santorini is more



Tourism on Mykonos
(photo by Mstyslav Chernov)

Tourism in Rome
(photo by Brodie319)

Tourism in Venice
(photo by Mario Spann)

Costa Carras receiving the Medal of Honour, Europa Nostra's highest honour, in 2013. (with European Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and Europa Nostra President Plácido Domingo)



severe than Mykonos because it is an exceptional island. It is geologically, archaeologically, and culturally one of the top places in Greece. That the forces which try to preserve and the forces which try to destroy are very evenly balanced in Greece.”

“Strangely enough, I think that the pandemic and the climate crisis may ultimately bring us to our senses because it will lead people to consider carefully before making a journey. People will start measuring in other terms than just money. They will begin measuring in terms of carbon footprint. It has not happened yet. I’m saying it will happen eventually. And it will happen because the countries from Northern Europe are very

soon going to be talking in those terms. Everybody’s going to be asking: what is your and what is my carbon footprint? In one sense, that will be an egalitarian experience, but in another sense, an aesthetic experience because we are all going to have to cut things that we want to do. There is no point just going to an island to have a glorious time in a nightclub because you could have a fabulous time in a nightclub in your hometown. If you want the experience you can get only on that small island, you don’t want the other part of the nightclubs and such to be there. The people who are on the receiving end of this process, the people who live on the island, will then start thinking about adapting their product to meet the demand.”

“One of the things that Elliniki Etairia is doing and doing very well is the Paths of Culture programme. This long-term project is trying to create a different sort of tourism, spread over a more extended period in the year, which doesn’t reach such peaks in the summer season. That is the sort of tourism that we think will have a perfect future. Although it is already successful, at present, it is still not seen as a real solution. They say, ‘okay, great, nothing wrong with that, but it’s not my bread and butter.’”

“I believe that whatever local authorities are trying to do presently, the market has been against us. And that is a big problem. I think that it will gradually change in the next ten years. The faster it changes, the better for all of us. The situation in Spain, for instance, is worse than in Greece. In Spain, they built massive hotels. We have the white fungus of concrete apartment buildings, but we do not have huge hotels. There may be some on Kos, Rhodos, and Crete, but not on most islands. This has been a partial success of Greek planning legislation, which is much stricter than people think. Greece is not a country where you could do

Dubrovnik is one of the most-visited cities of Europe (photo by Bracodbk)

Athens during the COVID-19 pandemic



An ancient olive tree on one of the Paths of Culture



Greek Paths of Culture

Winner of the European Heritage/Europa Nostra Award 2019

Greek Paths of Culture is a multi-disciplinary programme of selecting, conserving, clearing, signposting, and linking up public footpaths in areas of particular environmental or cultural importance in Greece. The programme restored a total of 658 km of hiking and bicycle routes, many of them dating from ancient and medieval times, in no less than 13 regions across Greece.

The efforts and the involvement of the local communities are key to the success of the project. Schools, young people, and volunteers from all over Greece are invited, often through seminars and presentations, to use the paths and include them in educational activities. By 'adopting' one of the paths, they become deeply engaged with the history, maintenance and activities of the walking routes.



Lydia Karras, President of Elliniki Etairia, receives the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award from Executive President Hermann Parzinger (right) and Secretary General Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović (left), in the company of actor Yannis Simonidis (photo by Felix Quaedvlieg)



Local school children on one of the Paths of Culture

Cruiseship near Santorini (photo by Mariordo)

'White Fungus' around the village of Pyrgos on Santorini



anything you wanted to do. You could do more things than you should have been able to do, but it was not without regulations. Only during the dictatorship, could you do whatever you wanted to do and get away with it.”

“A keyword in sustainable tourism is community. Tourism puts tremendous pressure on communities, but there is hope as long as the sense of community remains. For instance, my neighbourhood is Plaka, in the very centre of ancient Athens. We are a mass tourist site, unquestionably, from around Easter to the end of October. However, from the end of October until Easter in the next year, we are not a tourist site. We are still a community, and people know one another. The community feeling in Plaka is not destroyed. The community is destroyed when tourism is a year-round story. If it shuts down

in the off-season, there is hope. On some of the Greek islands there is that balance: just like nature, it purifies itself during the winter months. Ordinary people live their everyday lives, harvest their crops, tend to their animals, take their old people to the doctor in Athens. During the winter months, they go to all the local festivals and activities. They work very hard again from the end of April through to the end of October. And the cycle repeats itself. I am not pessimistic about this.”

“One of the things we urgently need to do is start to promote less-visited sites around Europe. In Greece, for instance, we need to give bigger priority to Thessaloniki, which is an important city with an important Byzantine, Ottoman, and Jewish past. We need to try and persuade people of the fact that Thessaloniki is a very well worthwhile place to visit. I think

we will succeed in doing this.”

“However, I do not think we can easily reduce the pressure in big cities, in the major centres of Western civilisation. When you’re talking about London, Paris, Rome, Florence, Milan, Madrid, Barcelona, Hamburg, Munich, Amsterdam, Athens, we will not avoid mass tourism. One of the things that will not go away is that even if people travel less, they will want to see some of humankind’s fundamental monuments. And that means that they will make their way to these places, and they have a right to do so. It is important to experience other cultures. Nobody changes who one is, but trying to appreciate different cultures is a very worthwhile human experience. Having said that, the one aspect that will change tourism fundamentally, in the long run, is climate change. It is our most substantial existential threat. I think it will change our whole way of being. It won’t happen quite in my lifetime. I’m already in my eighties, but it will happen soon.”

“My children are already part of these changes. Climate change will also directly impact heritage sites. Venice, for instance, is genuinely in peril and remains at risk. The whole physical structure of the city is at stake. One deciding factor is that they haven’t realised how disastrous cruise ships are. I speak as somebody who has operated cruise ships, although not one of these massive ships that exist today. These cruise ships pollute. They create a huge problem wherever they go. They look nice and clean, but they produce a great deal of pollution. Especially in a fragile ecosystem



such as the Venice lagoon, this is very dangerous.”

“I have not been active in shipping since 1987, but I know many owners, and I know the business. The leading Greek shipping business is cargo shipping. This is the least polluting because the ships are comparatively slow. They are carrying cargo cheaply, effectively, and comparatively, non-controversially. Most pollution of the sea does not come from ships; it comes from shore facilities.”

“Nonetheless, shipping has a bad environmental image. One of the most prominent Greek shipowners, who has connected himself with Europa Nostra, has been urging what we call ‘slow steaming.’ Nowadays, you can monitor ships closely; you can know what a ship is up to. Except when it concerns the ship and crew’s safety, ships

should be forced to slow down. If they go slow, they sail most economically, just like a car driving 80 kilometres an hour. That’s the cleanest speed.”

“This policy does not go against tankers’ or bulk carrier’s interests so it is a feasible strategy against climate change. On the other side, cruising is a luxury, not a fundamental part of the economy. In the shipping industry, in general, you have to understand and meet others halfway. But that is not true of cruise ship operators. I think that they need to be put in their place by international public opinion very hard. If that makes cruising holidays much more expensive, and it will, so be it. That means that that part of the shipping industry will decline in relative importance. I’m firmly in favour of that. The case for cargo is less clear cut. We should prefer our vegetables to come from our back garden, rather than from

somewhere in China.” “On the other hand, machinery can be made more eco-friendly in bulk in China, maybe more than here. Cruising is the area where there would be a clear benefit in the industry’s becoming smaller, but there’s also a cost. It’s not just a loss to the enjoyment of Costa Carras, who wants to go on an expensive cruise. You have to understand that one side of Costa Carras favours the new environmental theories. But, when push comes to shove, Costa Carras is also attached to certain things which depend on international shipping.”

“That is the same as tourism. We understand there is a problem when everybody comes, but we still want to go there ourselves. We need to fight the excesses, balance our approach, and come up with new sustainable solutions. It is going to be hard, but I am convinced we will eventually succeed.”



During one of the closing activities in Rijeka in april 2021

European Capitals of Culture

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound effect on all cultural heritage activities in 2020 and 2021. Many organisers saw their well-planned projects go up in smoke. Many events and trips had to be cancelled and exhibitions and concerts were postponed or called off.

The European Capitals of Culture boost cultural tourism and highlight the city's cultural heritage. The successful initiative was severely affected by the lockdowns, the quarantines, and the travel restrictions. Years of preparation seemed to be all for naught. Luckily, it was decided that the 2020 cities can hold their title until April 2021. Several cities in South East Europe have been nominated for this year and the coming years:

Rijeka, Croatia in 2020/21, Novi Sad, Serbia in 2021/22, and Timișoara, Romania and Elefsina, Greece in 2022/23.

RIJEKA, CROATIA (2020/21)

Nestled between the Mediterranean, Central European, and Eastern European influences, Rijeka has been part of as many as seven different countries over the past century of its development.

As part of the European Capital of Culture project, Rijeka has built and opened new cultural buildings and facilities, which are co-financed by EU funds, and offer hundreds of cultural, art and other events that involve more than 250 cultural institutions and organisations from Croatia and 40 other countries from Europe and the

rest of the world. Industrial heritage buildings and areas have been renovated and are repurposed into cultural spaces.

The cultural tourism route 'Following the Paths of the Frankopan Family,' which includes the renovation of 17 Frankopan castles and three religious sites in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, is also part of the project. The themes for the European Capital of Culture in Rijeka are water, work, and migration.

Novi Sad, Serbia (2021/22)

The city is exceptionally located at the mid-point of the Danube river and is the modern, political, cultural and administrative centre of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. In the era of



enlightenment and modernism, it was the centre of Serbian culture and creativity. It is a city of museums, galleries and theatres, with an important festival tradition.

As a European Capital of Culture Novi Sad will re-examine its modern identity, revitalise its cultural heritage, restore the existing cultural spaces and open new ones. The city will use the title to further encourage and develop the participation of citizens in an extensive programme of activities built around the theme of bridges.

TIMIȘOARA, ROMANIA AND ELEFSINA, GREECE (2022/23)

In preparation for the European Capital of Culture initiative, Timișoara asked its citizens to make a list of priorities. Which challenges should the city address first? The outcome gave the organisers a lot to work with. The inhabitants of the Romanian city mentioned the lack of civic energy, the intolerance towards marginalised groups, the loss of public space, the lack of a European profile of the city and the region, and the lack of a common vision.

The organising team in Timișoara concluded that restoring energy, the transformation of the individual into a citizen who is able to light up the city, would be the right theme to revitalise the city. Throughout its history, Timișoara had been a city of firsts. The first city in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to have streetlights, the first public lending library and telegraphic and phone service in what is now Romania, the first cinema screening, the first public swimming pool and the first football stadium in Romania, and the only European city with three state theatres in three different languages. This historical energy needs to return to the city, increasing cultural and social engagement, and incorporating the creative industries in the



long-term economic strategy of the region.

Elefsina (Eleusis) is one of the five most important sacred cities of antiquity, the city of the Eleusinian Mysteries and birthplace of Aeschylus. This was partly thanks to its natural port and strategic location, 21 km west of Athens, in the Thriassian Plain, the northwesternmost tip of the Saronic Gulf. The city was transformed from the 19th century onwards into the productive engine of Greece and one of its largest industrial centres.

2023 Eleusis European Capital of Culture marks a new era of the town and its transition to a new development model, focusing on its dynamic cultural assets and fostering and developing its rich tangible and intangible heritage. The European Capital of Culture status will act as a catalyst on the national, local and European level and change the stereotypical image of Elefsina as an industrial city and further establish Elefsina as a dynamic cultural centre in the region.

Ancient ruins in Elefsina (photo by Carole Raddato)

European Heritage Label



The European Heritage Label sites symbolise the cultural foundation of today's Europe. Spanning from the dawn of civilisation to the creation of the European Union, these extraordinary places celebrate European ideals, values, history, and integration. Since 2013, several sites in South East Europe have been selected for their significance to European history and for bringing European citizens closer together.*

THE HEART OF ANCIENT ATHENS, GREECE (2014)

The Heart of Ancient Athens is an architectural complex of close to a hundred monuments with a history of 3,000 years. This historical landscape symbolises some of the most essential aspects of European identity, from the development of classical art and theatre, to democracy, philosophy, and scientific research.

THE FRANJA PARTISAN HOSPITAL, SLOVENIA (2015)

The secret hospital took care of wounded soldiers of different nationalities including enemy combatants during World War II. The simple wooden barracks of the hospital, run by the Slovenian partisans as part of a broadly organized

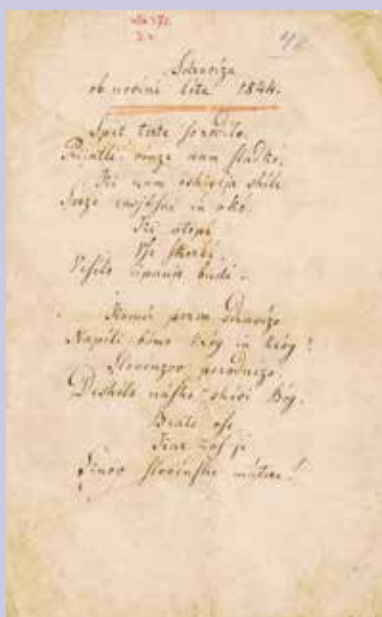
resistance movement against the occupying Nazi forces, was hidden in a small valley. The site was the victim of severe flooding but has been fully restored. Today, it has been turned into a museum promoting solidarity, democratic values and human rights.



Photo by Luka Kalan

ZDRAVLJICA - THE MESSAGE OF THE EUROPEAN SPRING OF NATIONS, SLOVENIA (2019)

Zdravljica is a poem written in 1844 by the Slovenian poet France Prešeren. It was published in 1848, after the abolishment of censorship in the Habsburg Empire. Written in Slovenian, it influenced the development of Slovenian identity, and more generally the promotion of freedom of expression. *Zdravljica* became a symbol of this famous Year of Revolution or the Spring of Nations, a pivotal moment in European history.



The positive reception of the poem and its transmission across Europe through German and Scandinavian translations in the 1860s/1880s, and in English and other languages since the mid-20th century, made the poem widely known. The continued importance of *Zdravljica* was illustrated in 1944 when the partisans resisting Nazi-fascism reprinted the poem. It was also sung in the 1980s and early 1990s during the period of democratisation leading to the independence



of Slovenia. In 1991, the new Slovenian Republic chose the 7th verse of the poem as its national anthem. In this verse, the poem expresses the ideal of a peaceful coexistence of all nations.

JAVORCA CHURCH IN TOLMIN, SLOVENIA (2017)

The Javorca Memorial Church is a unique Art Nouveau building constructed in the mountains by soldiers of the World War I Isonzo Front to remember fallen soldiers, regardless of their origin and culture. Today the church and its cultural landscape continue to symbolise this call for reconciliation and the unifying power of collaborative artistic creation and construction.

SIGHET MEMORIAL, ROMANIA (2017)

The Sighet Memorial is housed in a former Stalinist penitentiary which was used to imprison schoolchildren, students, and peasants from the resistance (1948-1950); political opponents, journalists, and clergymen (1950-1955); and common criminals until the 1970s. Nowadays, the building functions as an impressive memorial to the victims of communist regimes. The former prison symbolises the repression by communist regimes in Europe throughout the 20th century.



*The Krapina site in Croatia (selected 2015) is discussed in a different article in this magazine.



Solid as a Rock

The long-lasting beauty of dry-stone masonry



It is the essence of construction work, the most elemental of building techniques: carefully stacking one stone upon another, fitting one rock next to another, layer by layer without mortar or other materials to keep them together except gravity. Dry-stone walls and houses seem to be at ease with their natural surroundings, harmoniously fitting in as if they have always been there. The seemingly simple stone constructions have

not only sculpted and moulded the European landscape, they are deeply rooted in local communities. They not only look good, but they are also sustainable and very useful in creating micro-climates, enhancing biodiversity and preventing soil degradation. The techniques, some of which have been in use since prehistoric times, have been perfected over the centuries, handed down from one generation to the



next. As dry-stone techniques are sensible and practical, it is therefore no surprise that we can find them all over Europe. This perfect example of shared European heritage even led, in 2018, to a successful UNESCO application by eight European countries (Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland). The art of dry-stone techniques is now inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. What is surprising is that these techniques, which seem to fit so perfectly with the new European Union Green Deal, are disappearing at an alarming rate, especially in South East Europe where we can discover some of its most extraordinary and distinctive examples.

In the Eastern Adriatic, heritage organisations are trying to turn the tide. By their very definition, dry-stone structures are locally built from local materials, and are an intrinsic part of local heritage. That means that renovation of walls and buildings and the revitalisation of dry-stone traditions have to be organised in the form of small-scale



grassroot invention projects. The first step is convincing the small communities that their traditional and often derelict heritage is of European importance and that preserving it will improve their livelihoods and economic prosperity.

4 grada Dragodid – who won a European Heritage Award in 2011 for their outreach work – is one of the organisations in a race against the clock to transfer knowledge and skills to new generations. The team, which consists mostly of volunteers – young professionals and students of heritage and landscape, gather and document construction

techniques, and use digital, crowd-sourced data (suhozid.hr, dragodid.org). They have been active throughout Croatia, especially in Dragodid (Island of Vis) and Petrebišća (Nature Park Učka). Dragodid is a small village on Vis Island and very much off the beaten track. It was abandoned over 50 years ago but has been restored and revitalised through workshops and summer camps of dedicated volunteers of the organisation. The abandoned dry-stone seasonal village Petrebišća in the Učka mountains is also actively being restored and rebuilt.



Another dry-stone treasure can be found in Serbia's Stara Planina Nature Park. The stone settlement of Gostuša seems to have grown naturally from the surrounding mountains. The buildings are not only a testimony to the complex history of this part of Europe, they are simply magnificent to look at, and fit well with the natural landscape. The village was in danger of slowly disappearing, a forgotten victim of the ever-changing modern times. Since the 1970s, most people had left the tiny community to seek a better

life in the city. The Institution for the Cultural Monuments Preservation of Niš, under the guidance of architect conservator Elena Vasić Petrović, came to the rescue. Their conservation study of Gostuša won a European Heritage Award Grand Prix in 2016. The group of researchers not only consisted of architects and heritage professionals, but also of experts in ethnology, archaeology, photography and history. This multi-disciplinary approach helped to put the village back on the map and

to increase its potential as a tourist destination. In several campaigns, experts and students created a strategic framework for the sustainable development and proposed an official protected monument status for the village. The project also documented all the buildings with hundreds of architectural drawings and photos. The study is a key example of heritage-led regeneration of the countryside. The village is now ready for its international close-up.



These examples prove that the restoration of dry-stone masonry buildings and

walls has great potential in South East Europe. As is well-known from examples

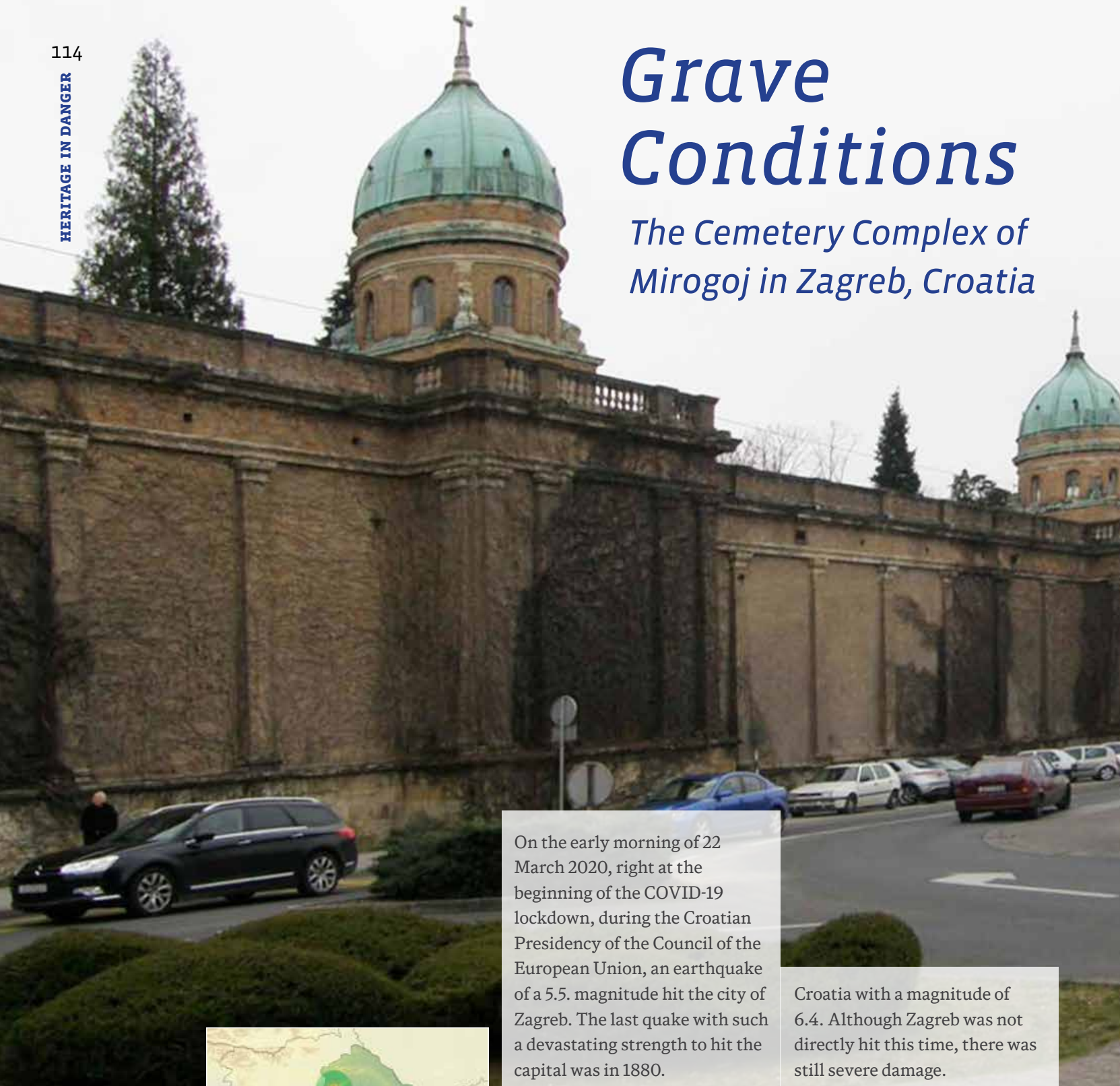
from, for instance, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Scandinavia, the revitalisation of these charming and much-loved buildings and walls gives a welcome boost to local economies. The fact that these ancient building practices tick all the right boxes of sustainability in a new environmentally conscious Europe should convince authorities on all levels to support and stimulate the preservation of this European heritage with increasing enthusiasm and perseverance.



An exceptional example of dry-stone craftsmanship is the tiny Dalmatian island of Baljenac in Croatia. The tiny stone droplet in the azure blue water of the Adriatic is completely covered in dry-stone fences, more than 23 kilometres of them. It is a man-made miracle of masonry, separating small parcels of agricultural land owned by the farmers of nearby Kaprije island. Seen from above it looks like the islet is a giant fingerprint. Kaprije itself also has an almost impossible number of dry-stone walls, as do most of the islands in the region.

Grave Conditions

The Cemetery Complex of Mirogoj in Zagreb, Croatia



On the early morning of 22 March 2020, right at the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown, during the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, an earthquake of a 5.5 magnitude hit the city of Zagreb. The last quake with such a devastating strength to hit the capital was in 1880.

Croatia with a magnitude of 6.4. Although Zagreb was not directly hit this time, there was still severe damage.



The Cemetery Complex of Mirogoj

Map of Croatia with the epicentre of the earthquake

The rescue efforts were hindered not only by the pandemic but by freezing temperatures and snow. More than 25,000 buildings were damaged of which 1,900 severely. Twenty-seven people were injured, and a young girl lost her life. On 29 December 2020, another earthquake hit

Most modern buildings in Zagreb have been constructed with earthquake-proof concrete and survived the heavy tremors without many problems. However, the city's historic buildings were not so lucky. Walls and roofs collapsed. Churches and other monuments



Details of the structural damage to the buildings



suffered extensive damage. It is clear that Croatia's monuments and cultural heritage sites need to be better protected from the devastating effects of these natural disasters, but how?

The Mirogoj Cemetery complex, a green oasis just north of the

city centre, was one of Zagreb's heritage sites that fell victim to the earthquake's destructive force. Entering the cemetery from the Herman Bollé Avenue, it feels like you are entering an ancient city. Domed towers and columned temples intersperse the ivy-covered walls. The

harmonious, monumental cemetery was built between 1876 and 1929 in Neoclassical architecture, popular in the 19th century. Designed by German architect Herman Bollé, it is an excellent example of a multiconfessional funerary park constructed around



The damage to the roof of the Complex

Europe at the time. Many historical figures and Croatian personalities have been buried in Mirogoj, contributing to the site's emotional significance. It is part of the European Cemeteries Route of the Council of Europe and the Association of Significant Cemeteries of Europe.

The earthquake caused severe cracks in the walls and damaged the floors. Many architectural and decorative elements collapsed. The Ministry of Culture and Media of Croatia immediately intervened with

emergency measures. However, the site's structure has also been a victim of the incessant rain which has occurred in the past months. The COVID-19 pandemic further impeded damage assessment and ongoing conservation processes. The damage is so extensive that international cooperation seems the only viable option. Therefore, the Ministry successfully nominated the Cemetery Complex of Mirogoj to the 7 Most Endangered Programme 2021.

The Advisory Panel of the 7 Most Endangered Programme noted: *"This cemetery complex is a fine example of European Neoclassical architecture by a German architect inspired by Italian, Viennese and Prague counterparts. Besides its architectural and aesthetic values, the cemetery has important historical, social and emotional significance as the first multiconfessional public cemetery in Zagreb and as the resting place of numerous historical figures. The*

Ministry of Culture and Media of Croatia has taken the first crucial steps to protect the site. Still, international solidarity is greatly needed to rehabilitate the Cemetery Complex of Mirogoj."

The European Investment Bank Institute contributes a €10,000 grant for a specific proposal for conservation works if the site is eligible and selected for the 7 Most Endangered. The Ministry of Culture and Media suggests using this grant to repair the monumental tombstone of countess Vjekoslava. It is one of the best sepulchral designs of the architect of the cemetery, Herman Bollé. It consists of an intricately ornamented sarcophagus, surrounded by a wrought iron fence, backed by a vertical mount with texts in Croatian and German, topped by a cross and a massive wreath. It is one of the most representative monuments of the cemetery. The earthquake caused severe damage; the cross collapsed, and the sarcophagus was cracked. Comprehensive and careful interventions are needed.

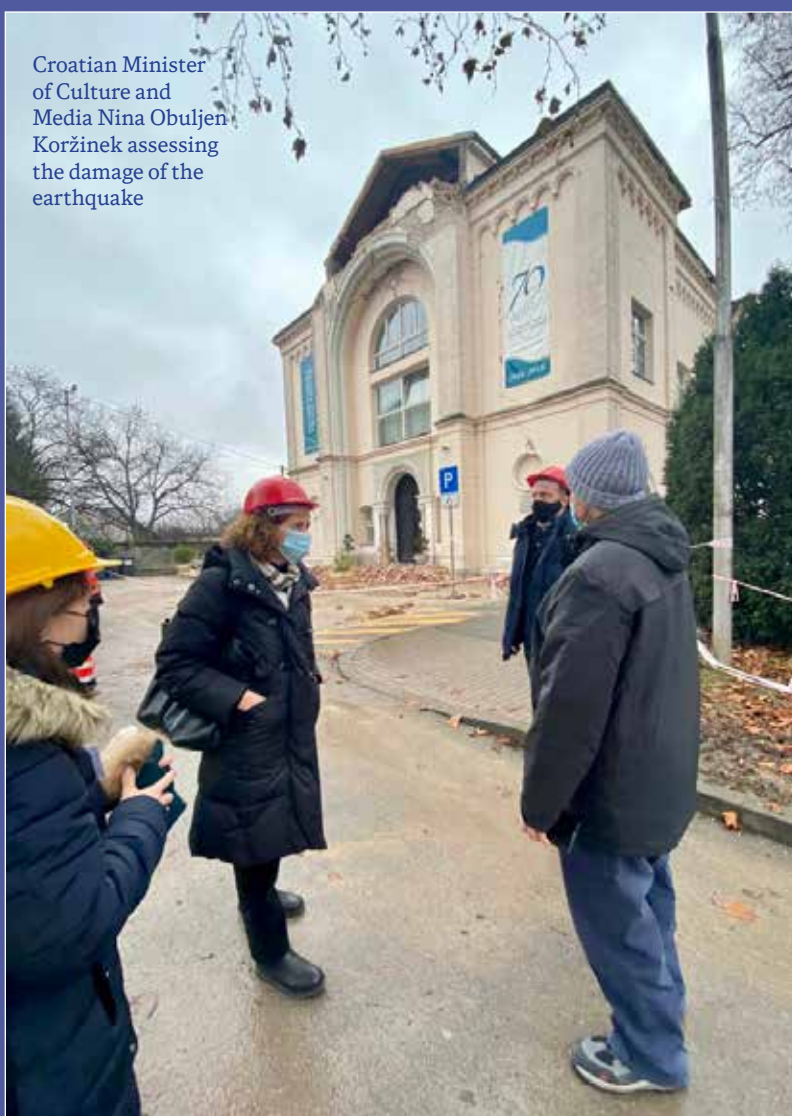
The monumental tombstone of countess Vjekoslava



Statement by the Croatian Minister of Culture and Media Nina Obuljen Koržinek



The year 2020, unlike any other in recent memory, showed us true powers of human actions and nature's response to them. Climate change has exacerbated the already vulnerable state of cultural heritage, while global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic further aggravated the situation. Croatia has been reminded of this in a particularly painful manner, and on two different occasions, on 22 March and 29 December 2020.



Croatian Minister of Culture and Media Nina Obuljen Koržinek assessing the damage of the earthquake

The first one gravely damaged the capital of Zagreb and the surrounding area, while the second, even more forceful one, destroyed the nearby Sisak-Moslavina County and provoked additional devastation to Zagreb. Vast damage, and the long work to recovery ahead of us, are true testaments to the importance of risk management, its assessment and mitigation. That so many sites have been wounded, bringing about craving for culture and its rehabilitation, speaks of the value of cultural heritage and its potential for healing us during difficult times. Equally, precious support offered to Croatia by the international community conveys the significance of togetherness and learning from one another. Our past and identity oblige us to care for our tangible and intangible heritage sustainably and without hesitation – in respect of our ancestors and for the future of our descendants.

7 Most Endangered 2022

At 10 March, due to the war in Ukraine, Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank declared the rich and diverse heritage in Ukraine to be THE most endangered European heritage.

On 29 March, the 7 Most Endangered heritage sites of 2022 were announced. Two of these endangered heritage sites are in South East Europe.



The Zogu Bridge
(photo by Emarilda Leti)

The Zogu Bridge in Albania is a masterpiece of civil engineering from the early 20th century in the Balkans. Built in 1927 over the Mat River in Northern Albania, the bridge is renowned for its architectural structure, its length and the style of its steel arches. It is considered an

important achievement in the field of metal construction and concrete structures built over rivers in Southern Europe.

Designed by German and Swiss engineers, the construction of the bridge was implemented by the Albanian engineer Gjovalin

Gjadri, using materials imported from Italy. Originally, it consisted of six arches but one of the arches was destroyed during the Second World War.

Despite its industrial heritage importance and the fact that the Zogu Bridge was declared



Birdeye view of the Neptune Baths in Băile Herculane (photo by Petru Cojocaru)

a Cultural Monument of first category by the National Institute for Cultural Heritage in Albania, the bridge has been poorly maintained and is in an advanced state of decay.

The nomination of the Zogu Bridge to the 7 Most Endangered Programme 2022 was made by an individual member of Europa Nostra from Albania.

The Neptune Baths in Băile Herculane are nestled between a deep mountain gorge and the river Cema in southwest Romania. The Baths are a striking monument in the thermal town of Băile Herculane, one of the oldest spa resorts in Europe. The first documented records of the town date back to 153 AD. Since then, the site has been under Roman, Hungarian, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian reign.

The current structure of the Neptune Baths was constructed between 1883 and 1886. Designed in an eclectic style, the main Baths building has a large facade treated in exposed brick, partially finished with

plaster and enriched with ornaments. At the time of the building's construction, it was the most modern spa in Europe. Its medical treatment centre boasted renowned doctors as well as visits from the eminent personalities of the time. Among the most notable guests were members of the royal Habsburg family, including the Empress Elisabeth of Austria – known as Sissi – and the Emperor Franz Josef.

After the fall of communism in Romania in 1989, the historic resort of Băile Herculane, including the outstanding Neptune Baths, was abandoned and fell into decay with the damage accelerating from 2004 onwards. Despite being declared as a Class A monument in 1980, the Baths have suffered continuous further degradation, due to water infiltrations and poor interventions.

The nomination of the Neptune Baths to the 7 Most Endangered Programme 2022 was made by the Locus Association, a Romanian NGO based in Timișoara.

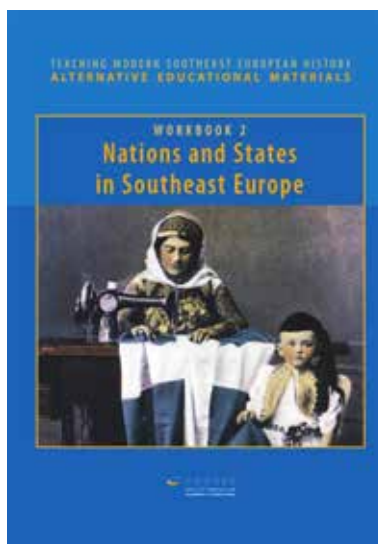


Interior of the Neptune Baths (photo by Heiko Probst)



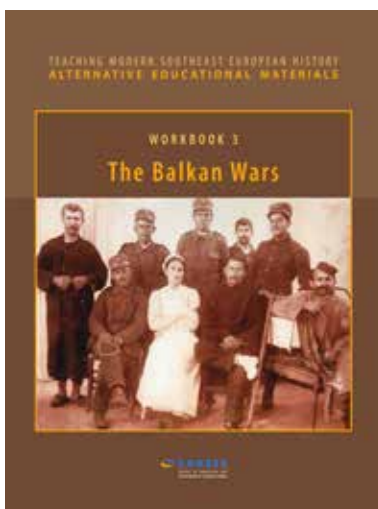
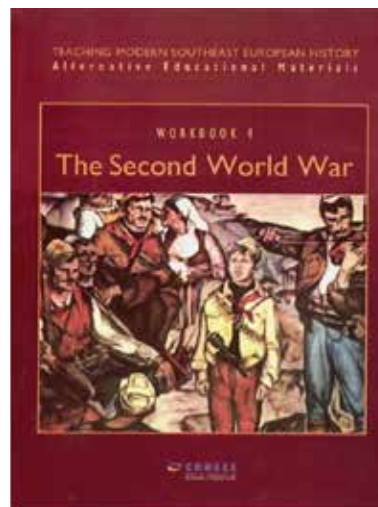
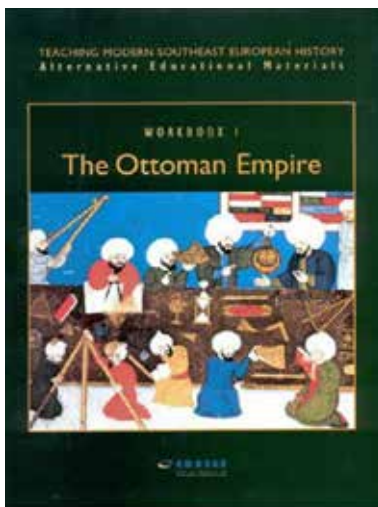
Lessons from the Past

The Southeast European Joint History Project



History never follows a straight line from the past to today. It is as messy, confusing and contradictory as the humans who lived it. In South East Europe, interpreting and discussing the region's history is a minefield along a dimly lit path with hidden traps at every turn. How to find a safe route through a labyrinth of lies, half-truths, one-sided perceptions and wishful thinking, which have sometimes reshaped historical fact beyond recognition?

It is not easy to forge a peaceful future when the troubled past is still dictating its terms. When fact and fiction behave like entrenched enemies, committed not to give one another an inch; when one history book tells a completely different story than another, depending on one's political, ethnic, or national identity. Historical interpretations in South East European history are extraordinarily complex, and shaped by centuries of conflict.



krokodil
Engaging Words

The Association **K.R.O.K.O.D.I.L.** is an acronym in Serbian and stands for: Literary Regional Gathering that Alleviates Boredom and Lethargy. It is example of one of the organisations that tries to find new and innovative ways to increase cultural dialogue in the Western Balkans through the production of literary, cultural and socio-political programmes and projects to support dialogue, reconciliation and reconstruction of the broken links in the Western Balkans. In their Declaration they state: *“In the states established after the breakup of Yugoslavia, there has been a pronounced revisionist attitude towards the past. Historical revisionism is an abuse of history, an intentional and tendentious distortion of past events. It implies adapting the past to modern political demands, isolating and emphasising desirable data and fabricating the truth, selecting historical sources, editing out everything that does not suit the ruling political ideas and programmes. In contrast, there are desirable advances of existing knowledge, discoveries of new historical sources and new interpretations of those already known, new methodologies and paradigms as well as constant reviews and recontextualisation, which are essential components of the work of historians.”*

The stories often change dramatically depending on one’s perspective, knowledge or understanding of circumstances. It is true that the colours of the past are rarely black and white, and there are quite some grey areas where interpretations can vary. However, history is a science and there are truths and there are falsehoods, independent of one’s point of view. You cannot define what is historically correct by voting or consensus. When the past is being distorted to fit someone’s present wishes, when facts are reduced to opinions, there can never be a real and lasting peace. It is essential in the process of reconciliation to evaluate what is being taught in history

lessons, especially to the next generation of children and students.

History teachers and educators from South East Europe decided that something needed to be done. The CDRSEE - Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, founded in 1995 to advocate democracy sustainable development and reconciliation among the peoples in the region. Through publications, conferences, and numerous other activities it has impacted the region in many ways. One of the first actions of the Joint History Project, launched in 1999 was to make a comparative analysis of the textbooks used in the



On 12 November 2020, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe decided to create the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe. It will build on the Council of Europe’s decades-long experience in history education, while complementing and strengthening its intergovernmental programme. *“It is a project for the future of young people that can help consolidate peace and European unity that is taking shape today,”* stressed Ambassador Marie Fontanel, Permanent Representative of France to the Council of Europe.



Exhibition in the City Hall in The Hague, Netherlands



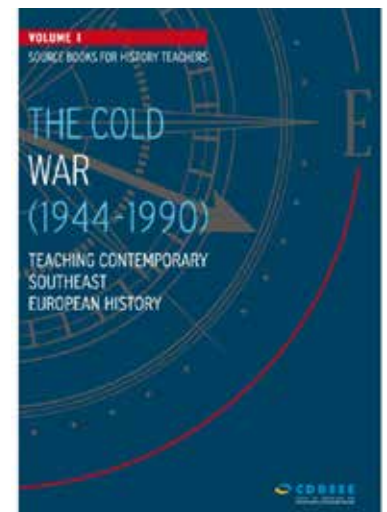
The ‘Targeting History and Memory’ Project

In the summer of 2018, the 3-year project Targeting History and Memory completed successfully with many events across Europe.

The European Union-funded project, in which Europa Nostra was a supporting partner, was developed and implemented by SENSE – Centre for Transitional Justice (Pula, Croatia) and Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past (Zagreb, Croatia) together with the Humanitarian Law Centre (Belgrade, Serbia) and the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo).

The project raises awareness of the deliberate destruction of

cultural heritage during the 1991-99 wars in former Yugoslavia. An international exhibition was an important aspect of the project. The exhibition travelled through several cities in the region in 2017. Europa Nostra was associated with the final display of the exhibition in the City Hall in The Hague, Netherlands, which was opened by the last President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Judge Carmel Agius. The exhibition was curated by Branka Benčić with texts by Mirko Klarin, Helen Walasek, Andras Riedlmayer, and Europa Nostra’s Višnja Kisić.



different countries. This was published in 2002. The Joint History Project (JHP for short), a cross-disciplinary group with teachers from several countries, then produced a series of work books of the region from the Ottoman Empire to World War II, from the Balkan Wars to the Cold War. The mission of JHP was clear. The only way forward was a more nuanced, open and rigorously researched historical debate. Students should be able to question and study the differing narratives and be able to freely discuss and learn the meaning of unity in diversity in the process.

In 2005 the JHP’s first four workbooks appeared: *The Ottoman Empire, Nations and States*, *The Balkan Wars* and *World War II*. More recently, the fifth volume *The Cold War (1944-1990)* and the sixth *Wars, Divisions, Integration (1990-2008)* were added. The project was concluded in 2018. The books have proven a great success whenever and wherever their use as supplementary classroom material has been permitted. All books were edited by scholars from within the region.



Costa Carras, Senior Vice-President of Europa Nostra, was co-founder of the CDRSEE: *“It remains urgent to ensure that every citizen and not just every historian in Europe develops a critical approach to historical evidence. The JHP has reached thousands of teachers in Southeast Europe and has entered hundreds of schools. It has been praised by Ministries of Education that have used it, including the Ministries of Education of Albania and Serbia”*

In a speech for Europa Nostra’s partner the European Investment Bank Institute in 2017, the Executive Director of the CDRSEE Zvezdana Kovač explained that the project fostered integration and reconciliation by promoting tolerance and discussion in South East Europe.

The publicly accessible books and readers come with a full package for classroom use, with suggestions for discussions and activities, as well as instructions on how to use primary sources in the classroom. All the JHP’s work is available at the website:

Dubravka Stojanović, Professor at University of Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy, summoned up the challenges of projects such as the JHP in an article on the Peščanik website: *“It has become clear that post-Yugoslav societies and countries have failed in finding solutions for their problems, largely because they did not want to examine how they found themselves in those problems in the first place. That crucially important look into the past cannot be made without the help of the education system. Only when the cataract is removed from the eyes of education, can we expect the new generations to have a clearer view. Many examples prove this clearly, Germany being the most prominent one. (...) Learning about the past no longer means memorising ‘one truth,’ but questioning each argument and understanding the complexity of each political moment. How to present arguments, ask questions, consider ‘the others,’ and to understand. This is our only possible corrective on our way to becoming better people.”*

Even though the work of the CDRSEE and their objective history books is valued and appreciated, there are still many hurdles to overcome in the reconciliation process in South East Europe. Many civil society organisations within and outside the region are actively trying to start dialogues between communities in every way possible. From small grassroots volunteer organisations to large-scale projects by the European Union, all are trying to facilitate discussions and exchanges, especially among young people.

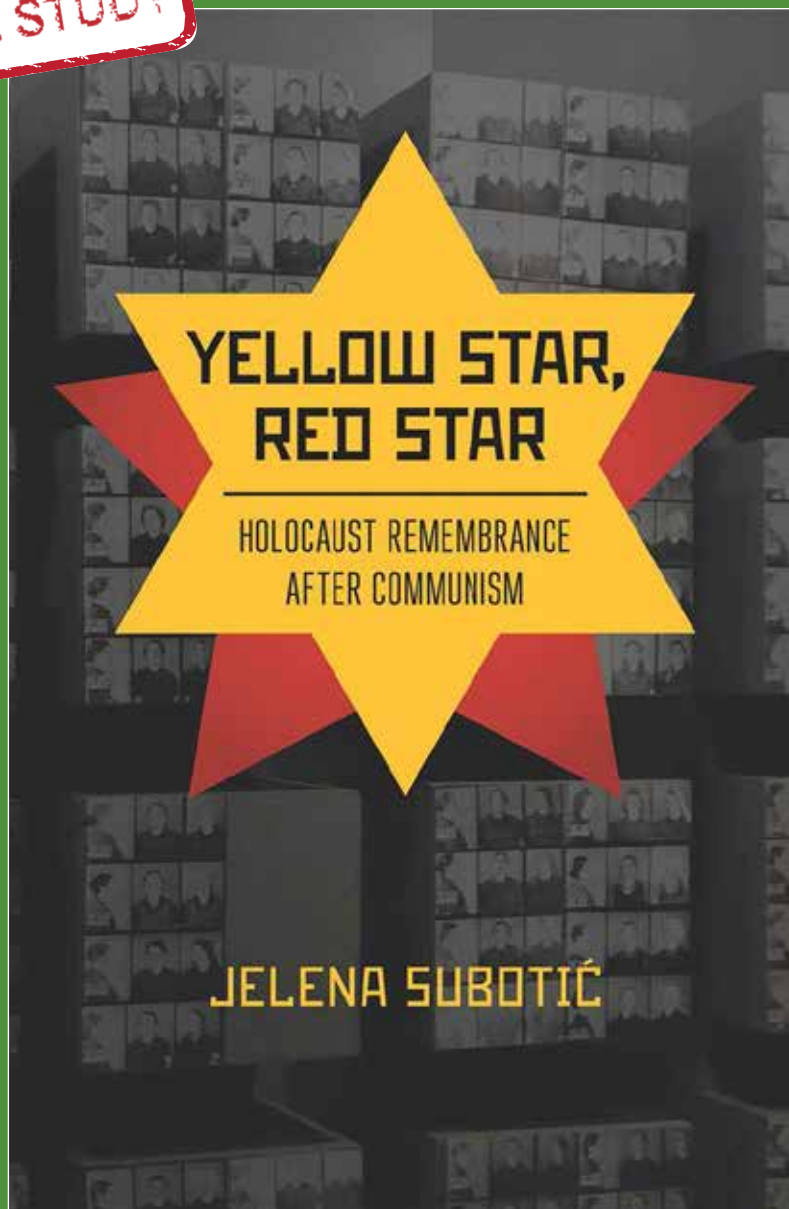


Divided Past – Joint Future was a European Union project with 18 project partners from 11 countries, and 13 associate partners. The project was started to counteract the increasing number of conflicts inside and between the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey, as well as their neighbouring countries, usually based on ethnicity and religion. Divided Past – Joint Future was initiated by the South East European Youth Network (SEEYN), a civil society network that engages young people who care about stability and the reconciliation process in the Western Balkans. Over the years, the SEEYN network’s programmes have empowered more than 7,000 young people to take an active role in their community. The Secretariat is based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and is home to 24 respective member organisations from 12 countries of the region and more than 300 youth experts, youth workers and youth activists as well as more than 2,400 volunteers.

Researchers Anja Gvozdanić and Vanja Kukrika presented the results from a qualitative study on the ‘Process of Reconciliation in the Western Balkans and Turkey’ during a 2017 conference organised at the House of European History in Brussels by EuroClio together with the Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE) and the International Students of History Association (ISHA).



CASE STUDY



Dark Days

The history of South East Europe is filled with conflict, wars, and oppression, although only since World War II can we say that this less so in Central Europe. How to remember and acknowledge the horrors of World War II and the systematic terror many suffered first under the Nazi and then under the communist regimes? Many countries in South East Europe are struggling to commemorate and face up to the past in a

meaningful way. For some, the steps towards becoming a member of the European Union have made asking the hard questions more urgent. How to remember and honour the hundreds of thousands of victims of the extermination camps and the labour camps? How to disentangle memory and history from nationalistic ideas of collaboration or resistance? The big brush strokes of historical interpretation leave little room

for complicated personal stories or detailed nuance. Wrong or right, good or bad, hero or villain.

Jelena Subotić is Professor of Political Science at Georgia State University in Atlanta. She is daughter of Irina Subotić, former President of Europa Nostra Serbia and Vice-President of Europa Nostra. Her book *Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance After Communism* explains why the remembrance of the Holocaust is still so problematic in Eastern Europe. She also discusses how much the memory of World War II is part of a much wider concept of national identity, post-communist reckoning and upcoming populism.

Subotić's book researches the mechanisms that come in to play when a state dies. She examines how post-Yugoslav Holocaust remembrance ties in with the country's judgment of its communist past and how antifascism was actively removed from state political memory, paving the way for populism.

Her own family history turned out to be more inextricably linked to the Holocaust than she had ever suspected, symbolic of the complexities of the issue. During her research in her mother's personal archive, the Historical Archives of Belgrade and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, she discovered a disturbing truth. She matched specific anti-Jewish measures – yellow armbands, confiscation of property, prohibition of use of public fountains, or public transportation – with the months of April-July 1941, when her own grandfather turned out to have been the head

of the Special Police. Growing up, she had had a vague idea that he 'worked for the police' during the war, but not that he was the chief of Special Police for the first three months of the German occupation and responsible for these actions. However, there was much more to her grandfather's story. His fate is proof of the complexity of history and the people who live through it and shape it. He also rescued people, including Jewish people and communists. He was discovered and tortured by the Gestapo and transferred to the Banjica concentration camp. After the war, her family suffered greatly under communism, the censorship and one-party rule under Tito, and the daily indignities of life under the regime.

During World War II, the victims were not only Jews and Roma, but thousands of antifascists, partisan communist fighters and their sympathizers, including a number of partisans caught in major battles against Germans in Bosnia, resistance fighters from Greece, Yugoslav International Brigade fighters from the Spanish Civil War and a number of 'racially inferior' non-Jewish Slavs who were transported, or murdered.

As Subotić's book makes clear, commemoration in South East Europe, the reconstruction of memory and the constant rearrangement of narratives urgently need open dialogue. She fears that state autobiographies are adapted and transformed into powerful tales that justify (if not directly produce) state partition and mass atrocity as they did in the wars of Yugoslav succession in the 1990s.



Buildings in derelict state in Sajmište



Monument to the Victims of the Sajmište Concentration Camp (photo by Pinki)



Derelict fairground central tower (photo by White Writer)

84 years ago, on 11 September 1937, **Sajmište** in Belgrade opened as a fairground. It was a celebration of everything new and innovative and a showcase for technological advancement. In World War II, the site became almost the opposite: a concentration camp, an evil place of death and persecution. Nowadays, most of the buildings are derelict and forgotten. The hope is that Sajmište can now change destinies for a third time and become a symbol of remembrance and a centre for education and discussion.

History Teaching as a Common European Challenge

The Southeast European Response through the Joint History Project (1999-2019)

Published by the Association for Democracy in the Balkans

Edited by Iannis Carras



Cover illustration of “History Teaching as a Common European Challenge”

For 20 years, the Joint History Project published workbooks for history, which should incorporate different approaches to the same historical events and work on a shared understanding of regional history. The Thessaloniki-based Center for Democracy and Reconciliation for Southeast Europe (CDRSEE) asked historians from several Balkan countries to develop these books with sensitive and controversial historical material where there are no final and no fully resolvable answers.

In this concluding book, “History Teaching as a Common European Challenge”, we find contributions of scholars and politicians who discuss the merits and challenges of the project and envision the road ahead. The complex endeavour can be a model for

the work of historians in other regions, especially those conflict-prone areas where feelings about history are strongly felt. It is a bittersweet goodbye. The book celebrates the project’s accomplishments but also expresses profound concern for history education in general and in the region in particular.

Together with the late John Brademas and Nikos Efthymiadis, the late Costa Carras founded the Association for Democracy in the Balkans in 1995 and subsequently the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe. He served as Rapporteur for the Joint History Project from 1999 to 2019. They put together a unique group of historians coordinated by Professor Christina Koulouri. She guided the other editors and special

advisers from Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community, all from Southeast Europe, thus demonstrating the high regional quality of teaching and research.

Christina Koulouri proved an exceptional and effective General Editor for both series of workbooks. She explains in the book that, since 1999, the project has been carried out by a group of more than thirty historians representing all the countries in the region, mainly academic historians who are experts in modern history and history didactics. The JHP has contributed to building transnational networks of cooperation at an academic and school level. The historians belong to the generation who lived through the recent wars and political transitions in the Balkans. They decided to take up the responsibility of suggesting how to teach these events. She sees this as the reason why JHP’s membership transcended professional commitment and integrated a common vision and common values regarding history teaching.

Ambassador Matthew Nimetz (the first Chair of the CDRSEE from its establishment in 1997 to 2001 and Board Member through the life of the Center), quotes George Orwell from his novel 1984: “Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past,” to summarise one of the main challenges of the project.

The first four books (The Ottoman Empire, Nations and States,



The people behind the Joint History Project at the concluding meeting at the National Hellenic Research Institute in 2020

The Balkan Wars and The Second World War) appeared in 2005. They were translated into every regional language, Romanian and Slovene excepted, but also into Japanese! These workbooks have been successfully used in schools throughout the Western Balkans, bringing the Center, through history teachers, into contact with tens of thousands of secondary school pupils. The JHP Workbooks were praised alike by the Albanian and Serbian Ministries of Education in a tribute to their professionalism, fairness and integrity. The books were honoured with the Human Rights Award of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in 2013. In 2017 alone, the Ottoman Empire workbook was downloaded in full almost 25,000 times, and, in part, 124,000; while the Second World War workbook was downloaded in full 25,000 times, and, in part, 153,000. Yet, in almost every country of the region, there were objections raised by nationalist historians.

Most of the contributors of this last JHP-book celebrate the remarkable achievement of the project but also warn that the books are only the beginning of a lengthy process. E. Busek, for instance, states that looking back on the efforts of the Joint History Project, he can only conclude that these have to be continued. Still, as the Austrian poet Ingeborg Bachmann had put

it: “History keeps teaching, but it doesn’t find any students.” A. Lamassoure draws attention to the fact that the lack of history teaching is not just an issue of Southeast Europe. He recalls a recent UK poll where 26% of the respondents in the age group 16-29 believed that the Second World War was fought between France and Great Britain, and Waterloo was a battle during that war. He points to the fact that we are condemned to live with dozens of different narratives, each mentioning the history of Europe in its own way. He draws attention to the need to read and listen to others’ narratives. V. Karamanolakis reiterates that no true reconciliation can ensue from silence, fanaticism, or ignorance; knowledge is essential. According to A. Palikidis, the workbooks help pupils see the past and think about it productively beyond the myopic lenses of nationalism. N. Budak points out that children deserve to learn history in a better way through research, thought and discussion. To achieve that, the workbooks of the JHP are a necessity. K. E. Botsiou recalls the focus of the workbooks on the human dimension of history and that the series will serve to emphasise this human dimension for many decades to come. H. Swoboda mentions that we will have to wait for another few generations to arrive at a common view of things.

Costa Carras (1938-2022) recalls the idea behind the Joint History Project to encourage existing and future efforts to teach European history not just as a celebration of a great cultural heritage but as a challenge to existing prejudices and stereotypes among Europeans. The JHP never asked any group to set aside its collective memories as a whole. It attempted to insist on critical and self-critical examination of all communal memories. Southeast Europe is not different in this respect from the rest of the world, and the lessons of the JHP project should be learnt across Europe: “A process of questioning, research, analysis, dialogue and synthesis in history-writing brings people closer and endows them with a broader and a deeper sense of identity, one that does not divide but, through an invitation to dialogue, unites. Its primary foundation is shared respect for truth and recognition of responsibility for our neighbour. Perhaps, if and when this is partly achieved, someone may recall it was in Southeast Europe, that creative but often despised corner of a great continent, where one serious effort to achieve such a synthesis emerged and, for twenty fruitful years, flourished!”

You can find the JHP workbooks online here

<https://panteion.academia.edu/ChristinaKoulouri/Books>



The ILUCIDARE Special Prizes

The power of heritage-led international relations and heritage-led innovation

The ILUCIDARE Special Prizes identify and promote best practice in cultural heritage-led innovation and international relations, as well as support and scale-up these outstanding achievements. The Special Prizes are selected by an

international jury of experts from the submissions to the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards, Europe's top honours in the field of cultural heritage. The international jury was chaired by Laurent Lévi-Strauss.

bring to light the vast potential of Europe's shared heritage to foster innovation and to enhance the EU's positive role in the world through international cultural cooperation. In these trying times, the shortlisted projects for the newly-launched ILUCIDARE Special Prizes are an inspiration for us all. They are true Champions of the Europe of Talents. Now, more than ever, we need to mobilise and unite the worlds of culture, heritage, innovation and research, and to reinforce our global partnerships. The shortlisted projects showcase that cultural heritage is a powerful catalyst for Europe's recovery and revival," said Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.

Both the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards and the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes contribute to the vital objectives of increasing heritage participation and access, mobilising knowledge and research, and reinforcing international cooperation and global partnerships through cultural heritage. Being co-funded by the Creative Europe and the Horizon 2020 programmes, the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes are a concrete example of how synergies can be built among European Union supported programmes to enhance their impact.

In May 2020, in the middle of the global pandemic, the first six shortlisted projects for the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes were selected and announced.

"The ILUCIDARE Special Prizes illustrate how cultural heritage bridges our past, our present and our future. They

"The shortlisted projects for the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes demonstrate that cultural heritage counts and creates value for Europe. In blending contemporary and historical techniques, developing cutting-edge solutions, and capitalising on cultural heritage to foster people-to-people dialogue and mutual understanding, these projects show how cultural heritage is a strategic resource for innovative, creative, open and



The 6 shortlisted projects for the ILUCIDARE SPECIAL PRIZES 2020 were:

Heritage-led innovation

- Smart Heritage City, France/Portugal/Spain
- St. John's Bulwark, 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands
- Typa – Estonian Print And Paper Museum, Tartu, Estonia

Heritage-Led International Relations

- Archaeology for a Young Future, Italy/Syria
- The Friends of Czech Heritage, United Kingdom
- The Oppenheim House, Wrocław, Poland

collaborative societies,” stated Koen Van Balen, ILUCIDARE project coordinator (KU Leuven, Belgium).

Secretary-General of Europa Nostra, Sneška Quaedvlieg–Mihailović said: *“The 6 shortlisted projects are remarkable examples of how cultural heritage can contribute to foster innovation and creativity in Europe and to enhance the positive role of the EU in the world through international cultural cooperation. These projects represent the Success Stories that Europe deeply needs in these trying times, and are a true inspiration for Europe and for the rest of the world.”*

Emanuela de Menna, Project Adviser at the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) of the European Commission, outlined that *“cultural heritage can foster innovation and contribute to the international cultural relations of the EU, including by promoting intercultural dialogue, supporting the just transition of our economies and societies, supporting climate action and promoting the sustainable re-use of heritage buildings.”*

The two winners of the ILUCIDARE Special Prizes – one for excellence in heritage-led innovation and one for excellence in heritage-led international relations – were announced during a special segment of the livestreamed digital European Heritage Awards Ceremony in November 2020.



Leather Painting Restoration in the Hall of the Kings of the Alhambra, Spain

ILUCIDARE SPECIAL PRIZES 2021 NOMINATIONS

Heritage-led Innovation

3D Reconstruction of Maison du Peuple - Horta Museum, Brussels, BELGIUM

This partial 3D reconstruction of the Art Nouveau building makes the building once again accessible and understandable to all.

Basilica of Santa Croce, Lecce, ITALY

An innovative process of restoration treatments and techniques allowed for a minimal intervention on the beautiful carved façade of the basilica.

HAP4MARBLE - Marble Conservation by Hydroxyapatite, ITALY

The HAP4MARBLE project has developed a new treatment for the conservation of marble artworks. Using a layer of hydroxyapatite (HAP), the same mineral which constitutes human teeth and bones.

AP Valletta, MALTA

This research-based architectural and design firm has provided architectural-engineering, restoration and interior design services in the historic city of Valletta.

Heritage-led International Relations

Northern Lebanon Project, ITALY/LEBANON

A joint Italian - Lebanese multidisciplinary team has rediscovered and shared 100 archaeological sites in Lebanon.

Friends of Bryggen and the Bryggen Foundation, Bergen, NORWAY

The Friends of Bryggen and the Bryggen Foundation have contributed to reviving Hanseatic inter-European ties and intercultural relations.

Preservation of the Wine Cellars of Negotinska Krajina, SERBIA

This long-term conservation project of vernacular wine cellars is possible thanks to a partnership of organisations in Serbia, Albania and Sweden.

Leather Painting Restoration in the Hall of the Kings of the Alhambra, SPAIN

This unique collection of paintings has been carefully restored thanks to the collaboration of different partners from Spain, France, Italy and Belgium.

EU-LAC Museums - Museums, Community & Sustainability in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, UNITED KINGDOM

This international team of museum professionals, researchers and policy makers have set up exchanges and improving relations between 154 countries and more than 100,000 people.

The winners of the Ilucidare Awards will be announced during the Europa Nostra Annual Congress in Venice in September 2021. For details please check europanostra.org



TYPA - the Estonian Print and Paper Museum (photos Mana Kaasik)

TYPA - the Estonian Print and Paper Museum was awarded in the category Heritage-led Innovation. The museum, founded in 2006, is dedicated to the preservation of print and paper heritage and is an example of how innovation can stem from understanding historical technologies and techniques.

Printing and papermaking have a long and central role in the history of Europe. TYPA preserves this shared heritage in an innovative way by combining contemporary tools with traditional techniques. The museum's collection is made up of historic printing equipment that has been restored, wherever possible, to full working order, allowing visitors to try out historical printing and papermaking techniques. The museum also promotes

Archaeology for a Young Future



innovative artistic and skill-sharing approaches and presents a rich programme of events.

“The Estonian Print and Paper Museum is a clear example of heritage-driven innovation. Its unique training and capacity-building activities support the collective transmission of a fragile European intangible heritage. The innovative aspect of this museum lies in its unique concept, the combination of contemporary tools and historical printing and papermaking techniques, and public engagement model,” the ILUCIDARE Jury noted.

‘Archaeology for a Young Future’, a project from Italy and Syria, was awarded in the category Heritage-led International Relations. The online exchange programme encourages school students in Italy and Syria to

discover their own, local history through archaeology and to virtually exchange these stories with one another in creative ways.

For many of the schoolchildren who took part, this innovative, yet simple initiative was their first experience of international cultural exchange and a common understanding of shared heritage. The programme has led participants, aged 11 to 14, to realise the value of archaeology, discover new places and become more deeply connected to their own localities.

The Associazione per la Valorizzazione dell’Archeologia e della Storia Antica (AVASA), in cooperation with the Tell Mozan / Urkesh Archaeological Project initiated the programme with the financial support of the





Steinmetz Family Foundation and the Cariplo Foundation.

“‘Archaeology for a Young Future’ is a strong example of how heritage can lead to people-to-people dialogue. This project promotes intercultural exchange and mutual understanding between students, teachers and local communities from Italy and Syria. It is a small-scale project with a bottom-up approach and modest budget, making it easy to replicate anywhere in Europe or beyond,” the ILUCIDARE Jury emphasised.

For 2021, nine projects have been selected for the Ilucidare Special Prizes for Heritage-led innovation and Heritage-led international relations. The winners will be announced during the European Heritage Award Ceremony in the autumn of 2021.



The Heritage in Motion Awards



Europa Nostra is also a founding organisation of the Heritage in Motion Awards, the European awards to celebrate multimedia excellence and accessibility in the field of cultural and natural heritage. The Awards are organised in partnership with the European Museum Academy and Europeana. The international jury evaluated projects in four categories: Websites, Film & Video, Apps and Interactivity, and Games & Interactive Experiences.

The 2020 fully digital edition of the Award Ceremony was livestreamed from Geofort, a Dutch science centre where everything revolves around the earth and climate change. The site is also on UNESCO’s Tentative List as part of the Dutch Water Line of defensive fortifications.

The Awards were announced by Karl Murr, the Chairman of the European Museum Academy, *Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović*,



IN
CULTURA
VERITAS

Secretary-General of Europa Nostra, Award-winning documentary maker Robin Lutz and Harry Verwaayen, director of Europeana. The Estonian Maritime Museum was awarded the Heritage in Motion ‘Best Achievement Award’ for their digital and audiovisual solutions in the Fat Margaret permanent museum exhibition *Towering Tales of the Sea*.

One of the shortlisted projects was *In Cultura Veritas*, a cross-border project of four local museums, abundantly celebrating the shared culture of Slovenia and Croatia. The European Union Interreg project leads to an increased number of visitors to cultural heritage sites and wine roads, which leads to increased revenue for all stakeholders, economic growth of the region and preservation of heritage. The jury appreciated the harmonious use of different storytelling techniques, combining elegant cinematography with animation and discreet re-enactments.

In the 2021 edition, the Casa Batlló (Spain) was awarded the Heritage in Motion ‘Best Achievement Award’ for their Casa Batlló 10D Experience. The award was given during a ceremony held on 21 September at, and livestreamed from, the Doge’s Palace in the World Heritage City of Venice, in the frame of the European Cultural Heritage Summit 2021.

The Battle for Belgrade

The Belgrade Fortress, the iconic historic landmark of the capital, Serbia, is threatened. Its impressive walls and ramparts are threatened by a proposed cable car and other unsuitable projects, leaving the site damaged and defaced.

The new Belgrade skyline in the evening as seen from the fortress (photo by Miloš Jokić)



The people of Belgrade love the fortifications and their greenbelt environment with a passion. One can see the locals relaxing in the many parks or admiring one of its spectacular viewpoints on any given day. The fortress is so large and extensive, you can easily walk around for a whole day. Strategically and stunningly nestled between the Danube and Sava rivers, this heritage treasure is more than a monument. It is an emotional symbol of the identity of the city, the country, and its people. Its origins hark back to prehistoric times, and the multi-layered site has Celtic, Roman, Byzantine, Hungarian, Bulgarian, medieval Serbian, and Ottoman and Habsburg

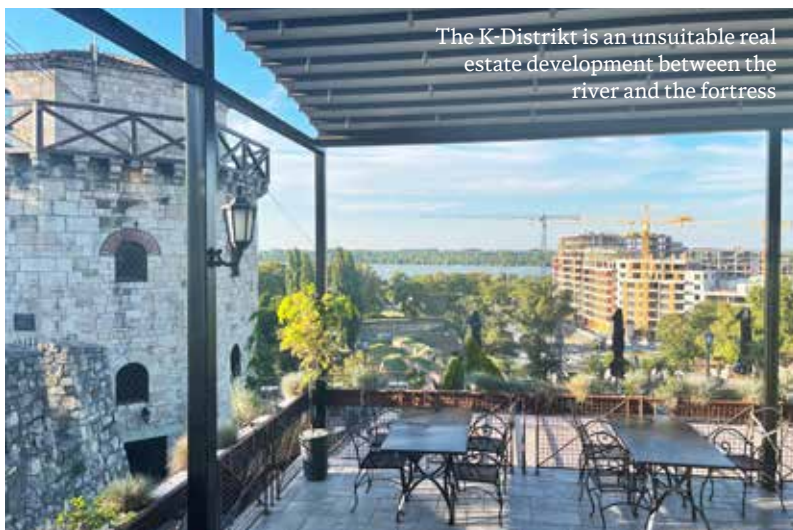
roots. The fortress and its Roman archaeological heritage (Singidunum) are even on the Tentative List of UNESCO as part of the Transnational serial nomination the Frontiers of the Roman Empire. Therefore, it is difficult to fathom why anyone in their right mind would try to endanger the authenticity and integrity of such an important and beloved site. However, that is precisely what is happening.

A cable car will go from Ušće shopping mall in Novi Beograd (New Belgrade), on the left side of the Sava River, to Kalemegdan Park at the upper part of the walls of the fortress on the other side. Like a conveyor belt, 30 gondolas will transport

3,000 people per hour in both directions at a speed of 20 km/h. Six monumental pillars of up to 42m high and 10m wide will support the aerial transportation between the different sides of the river. The construction of the large cable stations will need massive excavations and concrete piling, which will destroy this protected cultural, historic landscape. The result will be an unnecessary eyesore that will not only permanently distort the aesthetic value of a unique site, but also endanger its potential UNESCO status.

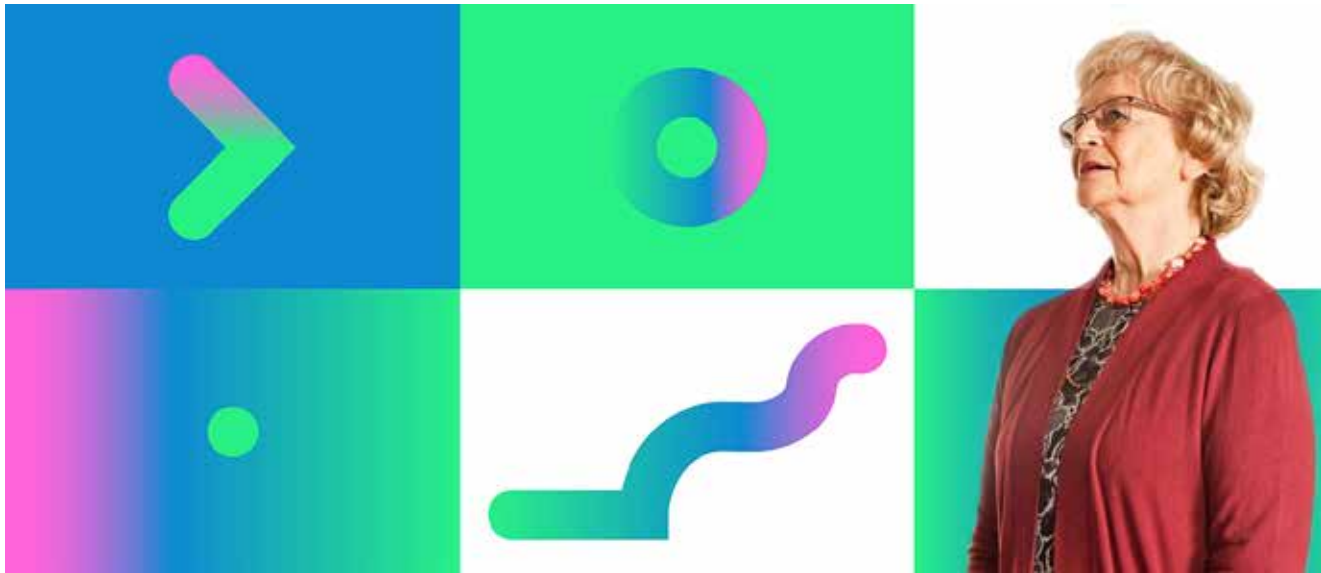
The cable car is not the only example. The K-Distrikt is being developed between the fortress and the river. The real estate development is completely unsuitable for the protected zone of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Although Belgrade's population is used to a government that works in mysterious and unscrupulous ways, the plans for the cable car created a public outcry. Under the guidance of Europa Nostra Serbia, a widely supported public campaign – 20,000 citizens signed the petition to preserve the fortress – helped to draw international attention to the cause. In 2020, the Belgrade Fortress and its surroundings were selected as one of Europe's 7 Most Endangered sites. The 7 Most Endangered programme is an initiative by Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute to draw attention to threatened heritage sites across Europe and save and protect them.



The K-Distrikt is an unsuitable real estate development between the river and the fortress

Prof. Irina Subotić;
Honorary Life
Member of
Europa Nostra
and former Vice-
President



The public campaign to safeguard the Belgrade Fortress and its surroundings has become a symbol of a battle between preserving heritage and the often misguided, and sometimes corrupt, actions of the government and construction companies. The cable car is just one of many projects that will change the face of Belgrade forever, and there seems to be a method to the madness of this strange interpretation of modernisation. Obviously, a city must move with the times and evolve, change, and transform. Every town in Europe is working on how to combine the old with the new, how to make their city

Inside the fortifications (photo by Marina Neskovi)

Walking along the fortifications (photo by Marina Neskovi)



more liveable, greener, and more attractive to investors and tourists alike. In Belgrade, however, the combination of poorly educated officials and aggrandising politicians has resulted in a form of vain incompetence. Good suggestions are scorned, better and cheaper solutions are ignored or politicised, and alternative plans are shelved. The question is, why is this happening, and why is this happening now?

Prof. Emer. Irina Subotić, former Vice-President of Europa Nostra and President of Europa Nostra Serbia, explains: “We live in a critical moment in

Serbia. The rule of law does not seem to exist anymore. We do not have institutions preserving cultural heritage anymore. You do wonder if the Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments are still involved? The authorities can do what they want. It is not necessarily all done with evil intent. It is a combination of a lack of knowledge and education, ignorance, greed, or corruption. They want to destroy the vestiges of the past because they do not understand its values. They do not view cultural heritage as a resource for the future.”



and foreign investors. They squander our water resources, they cut down our historical forests, they sell our fertile land and our rich mines, all our resources, our natural treasure and with it our history. I do not even speak about the huge ecological problems with which we are confronted on a daily basis...”

“In Belgrade, the authorities and their accomplices are working on ill-advised mega projects of which the cable car is just one example. The scale and purpose of the so-called Belgrade Waterfront and Skyline Belgrade are very destructive and controversial and will not benefit the people of Belgrade at all. Large shopping malls and expensive apartments and offices are developed and constructed outside the law and existing regulations, without any plan or legal permits. Can you imagine any European city where masked men demolish private small buildings at night? That is what happened in the Savamala area in 2016. The authorities wanted to clear the ground quickly before protesters could mobilise. They tore down houses in Hercegovačka Street, and they are now destroying many historical houses in the city centre, even listed ones! For example, the famous house in Resavska Street, designed by one of the first Serbian architects, Jovan Ilkić. Then, there is the disgrace of Staro Sajmište (Old Fairground), at the edge of the city centre. It is the only Nazi concentration camp in the world that has not properly paid tribute to the victims of the pogrom of Jewish,



The 25 metres high monument of Stefan Nemanja (photo by Dekriarh)

Serbian, and Roma people – and it is now threatened with totally inappropriate plans. The striking post office building designed by Momir Korunović is being disfigured, magnificent trees are uprooted, and Republic Square, a central Belgrade meeting point, painfully emptied and devastated. The list goes on and on. Sava Square has been completely transformed. In front of the nice, but closed and abandoned main railway station, constructed in 1884, they put a new pharaonic, 25 metres high monument of Stefan Nemanja.”

Nemanja was a medieval Serbian ruler and the founder of the first Serbian dynasty in the 12th century. The colossal sculpture sends a clear message to the Serbians about who is in charge. Subotić calls the design “ideologically nonsensical, sculpturally terrible, and aesthetically displeasing. And I am not even discussing the costs which are a ‘state secret.’”

“On the other hand, the opposition consists of mostly small groups who are focused on only one heritage site or one specific activity. There is not enough cooperation and pooling of resources and people. You have to understand that in Serbia many people are impoverished. There is no money for transportation or for office or technical equipment, for all those essential things that civil society organisations need to function. For most of the citizens, cultural heritage is not a priority. They are dealing with existential life and death issues, with diseases, with caring for their children, with putting food on the table. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the isolation of the different heritage groups even more, making the creation of one united front impossible. In many countries, the older generations are at the front line of protecting heritage, but in Serbia, older people are just tired, tired of their hard life, tired of the suffering, and lack of improvement and of hope. The government uses this situation to speed up their plans. They are selling out to tycoons

The uncontrolled building spree does not stop at the Belgrade city limits. All over Serbia, historical sites are being destroyed or vandalised under the thin pretence of modernisation. In reality, it is mostly about financial gain fuelled by a nationalist political agenda and personal profit.

For instance, the villa of Tito, the former President of Yugoslavia, in Zlatibor is a listed building. The area around it – a mountain paradise – has been lost to tall buildings and absolute disrespect for the protected site. Even Tršić, the beautiful heritage village and the birthplace of Vuk Karadžić, the famous linguist, reformer of the Serbian language, and father of Serbian folk-literature, was not safe.

Subotić: “Even Novi Sad, European Capital of Culture for the year 2021/22, is seriously jeopardised by aggressive construction in the very centre of the city. A restoration project destroyed the authenticity of the famous Bishops’ House. Instead of using marvellous baked tiles from a Hungarian factory, as they did in the 19th century, they have used modern, industrial ones shaped by the internet. Historical, magnificent buildings are being torn down in the city of Subotica, which should be proud of its 19th-century Secession and Art Nouveau heritage. The construction of new roads ruin dozens of archaeological sites in the eastern and southern part of Serbia. Unfortunately, we could go on like this forever.”



Novi Sad Bishop's Palace
(photo by Nick Savchenko)

“These are dark and dangerous times, but there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon. Firstly, young people are very involved in protecting their cultural heritage. They need all the help and support we can give them. Many have low incomes and few career prospects. They are living with their parents or with their grandparents. It is not easy to recruit volunteers because they are too busy surviving, even though many are willing. However, if we give them an incentive to work together, to cooperate, we can make a change for the better. The past does not burden young people; they are not afraid of fighting for a better future; they want to live in a civilised society; they want to be European as much as Serbian. The many young Serbians living and working abroad have seen that things can be different and can be better.”

“Secondly, we welcome international help to save Serbian cultural heritage. We need to save the Belgrade Fortress and all those other sites across Serbia that are threatened and destroyed as we speak. The

situation is urgent. Europa Nostra Serbia is just one organisation, and alone we cannot do enough. I am happy that Europa Nostra is engaging their network to help us. We need European institutions to support our grassroots organisations with resources. Not just with one project or one grant, but in a much more structural way, so we can make much-needed long term plans and support our young volunteers. We cannot do this alone. We need hope.”

The battle for the future of the Belgrade Fortress goes far beyond the protection of one monument. It has become a symbol of a much broader campaign to save the soul of Serbia. In the accession negotiations with the European Union, the undermining of cultural heritage protection should not be ignored. Instead, the unscrupulous behaviour towards the Belgrade Fortress is a canary in a coal mine, a shrill warning which should be taken to heart. Serbian cultural heritage is an integral and multi-layered part of Europe’s history and a collective European responsibility.

The Synagogue in Subotica

In 2014, the Synagogue in Subotica was added to the 7 Most Endangered list of the most threatened heritage in Europe. It was built in 1902, in what was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is considered one of the finest surviving examples of Art Nouveau religious architecture with its unique concrete and steel structure and Hungarian folk-art decorations. Hungarian architects Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab designed the Synagogue, which is recognised as a Monument of Culture of Exceptional Importance.

When the Synagogue was built, the town was home to a large and prosperous Jewish population of some 3,000. During World War II, the Jewish population of Subotica suffered greatly, and the small community left was too small to sustain such a large monument. The building is still of great importance to the Jewish community, nationally as well as internationally. The Synagogue was initially used by the Subotica National Theatre, but it has stood mostly empty in recent years, a sad shadow of its former glory. Several grants made emergency repairs possible, but regrettably, not all were done well, in some cases making the problem worse.

Recently, however, positive changes were made, and restorations were undertaken to secure a sustainable future and give the Synagogue a new lease of life. Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute's site mission concluded



The Synagogue (photo by Marko Stanojević)

that one of the keys to success was to involve all the stakeholders and provide appropriate training. Step by step, what looked like a lost cause started to become a success on many levels; for the city, for the local and international Jewish community, and as a symbol of community-driven heritage preservation.

However, new developments seem to undermine the initial success. The Subotica Synagogue Foundation still manages the Synagogue. The newly appointed president of the Foundation is Dr. Bálint Pásztor, a politician from the Hungarian minority who is also president of the town assembly, a potentially problematic conflict of interest. The Foundation has nine members, three of them are representatives

of the Subotica Municipality as the owner of the building, three are representatives of the Jewish Community, and three are representatives of the Hungarian National Minority Council. Since January, the Synagogue is officially open for tourists and visitors, but the COVID-19 pandemic and the state of emergency have severely limited access. The Jewish community sometimes organises activities in the Synagogue, such as the Autumn Jewish Culture Festival. The idea of using the space as a regional cultural centre still has not fully taken off. A long-term, sustainable future for the Synagogue is still elusive, and continued inclusion on the 7 Most Endangered list seems at this moment inevitable.



Interior of the Synagogue (photo World Monuments Fund)

Bač Fortress (photo by Pudelek)



“This project is an exceptional example of heritage preservation based on interdisciplinary collaboration. To achieve this, the project leaders have made use of European resources to research and carry out necessary preliminary investigations, which in turn has led to the implementation of a correct management strategy. A sustained effort has been made to maintain the aspect of the ruin through careful conservation. Besides, there is a strong educational component relevant to the entire region,” the Jury said.

Power of Example

Preserving cultural heritage in Serbia is a daunting task. However, some of the restoration and research projects have gained international recognition. 2018 in particular was an exceptional year in which the country won no less than three European Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards.

THE BAČ FORTRESS

The restoration of the Bač Fortress won the 2018 Grand Prix in the European Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards competition. The project ‘Centuries of Bač’ was initiated in 2006 to research and increase knowledge about the area of Bač: to implement fundamental conservation principles in its

preservation; to find a sustainable use for the site; to raise awareness of its value among the wider community.

The project successfully integrated the Bač Fortress into the local community’s life and has found a sustainable use to ensure its future. It has been restored, its archaeological remains preserved, and its interior transformed into a visitor centre and exhibition space.

For the past 15 years, the Fortress has been the regional centre point of the European Heritage Days, an initiative of the Council of Europe. Due to this project’s success, the Bač Fortress was listed on UNESCO’s Tentative List in 2010 as part of the cultural landscape of Bač and its surroundings. The listing mentions numerous cultural and natural sites and monuments, symbolising the 8 millennia long cohabitation of man and nature. Besides the Bač Fortress, there is a treasure trove of rich and diverse built heritage, such as the Bodjani Orthodox Monastery, the Franciscan Monastery of Bač and the remains of a Turkish Bath.

The Bač Fortress is a testimony to the area’s cultural diversity, linking the Balkans with Central and Western Europe.

THE PAVILION OF PRINCE MILOŠ

Constructed in 1907, the Pavilion of Prince Miloš is located at one of the oldest mineral water sources in Serbia and was the first bottling plant in the country. Several buildings in the Bukovička



The Pavilion of Prince Miloš (photo by DeKovach)



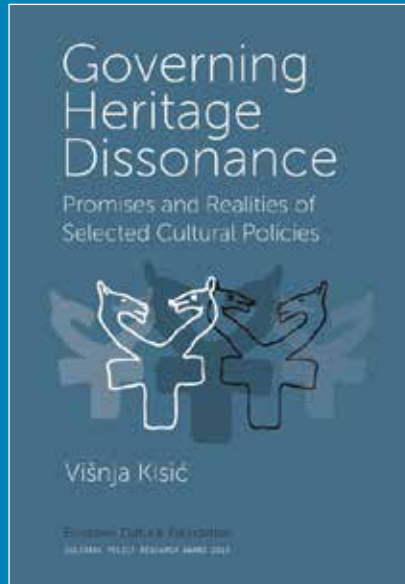
The Pavilion of Prince Miloš before restoration (photo by Milan Zečević)

Spa Park, in which the Pavilion is located, suffered the effects of neglect during the period of unrest in the last century. In May 2014, floods destroyed most of the Park's buildings. The Ministry of Culture immediately placed the Pavilion on a list of significant buildings that needed to be restored. The renovation of the Pavilion ultimately took just nine months. The Kingdom of Norway financed half of the project through the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The other half was funded by the mineral water company Knjaz Miloš, the municipality of Arandjelovac, and the Bukovička Spa Hospital, who managed the project.

RESEARCH AND CATALOGUING OF THE STATE ART COLLECTION OF SERBIA

Despite its fascinating content, the State Art Collection of Serbia was never thoroughly researched or catalogued until 2006. That year, a project to study the collection was initiated, funded by the Ministry of Culture of Serbia. The State Art Collection has a rich and curious history. It was symbolically founded in 1929 with the proclamation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The last additions were made in the late 1970s. The collection was intended to merge local and European cultural values with the new national identity of Yugoslavia. The research team had to begin with fundamental tasks. The collection was first correctly inventoried: comprehensive archival research was undertaken on all the present works. Finally, a proper database (both digital and analogue) was created with a separate dossier for each piece of art. The Jury commended what it deemed *“the excellent quality of research on a remarkable collection of art.”*

Pioneering study on heritage conflicts by Dr. Višnja Kisić



In 2017, the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) published *Governing Heritage Dissonance: Promises and Realities of Selected Cultural Policies*, written by the then Secretary-General of Europa Nostra Serbia Višnja Kisić. This pioneering study, which won the ECF's Cultural Policy Research Award in 2013, deals with the issues of heritage-related conflicts and potentials of heritage for intercultural mediation and reconciliation processes.

Drawing on illuminating case studies from South East Europe, Višnja Kisić connects heritage studies and cultural policies with differences, conflict, and reconciliation issues. The book prompts us to rethink how we approach the past and deal with diversities between cultures,

nations, and generations at a time of increasing fragmentation across Europe. Her timely analysis suggests approaches to our shared heritage that could open avenues to a better design for Europe's common future.

The Secretary-General of Europa Nostra, Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, gave the book her full endorsement. *“In times when conflicts are becoming increasingly culturalised and fuelled by identity politics, this pioneering study is timely in connecting heritage studies and cultural policies with issues of difference, conflicts, and reconciliation. Using the case of South East Europe as an exploration ground for wider philosophical and practical questions related to heritage, it calls on us to rethink how we approach the past and deal with diversities – among cultures, nations, communities, classes, gender, and generations. Finally, Kisić offers invaluable insights into the benefits and flaws of international development aid and transitional justice actions in post-conflict areas. She makes a strong case for the crucial role of culture and heritage in overcoming symbolic violence and creating an understanding of ‘the other’”.*

An online version of the book can be downloaded from the European Cultural Foundation website.



Photo by Boro Marić

South East European
HERITAGE



Photo by Klaudio Katelan

South East European
HERITAGE



Photo by Samir Karahoda

South East European
HERITAGE



Photo by Samir Karahoda

South East European
HERITAGE



Photo by Zdravko Yonchev

South East European
HERITAGE



Cooperation, Understanding and Respect

The work of the South East European Heritage Network

Established in 2006, the cultural heritage network of non-governmental organisations from South East Europe celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2021.

The cooperation was an idea of the Swedish organisation Cultural Heritage without Borders, an NGO that works in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, and regionally in the Western Balkans. The inspiration for setting up a network came from the urgent need to find common ground for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage of

the region. They started from the viewpoint that cultural, ethnic and religious diversity should not be seen as a stumbling block but instead as a stepping stone for cooperation and partnerships. The distinctiveness and variety of the intangible and tangible heritage should be celebrated and used as a unique and valuable resource for local

sustainable development. South East Europe should be a region where people cooperate, understand and respect one another on the basis of their cultural differences. Clearly, not the easiest message in an area where these differences are usually exaggerated and abused by unscrupulous politicians and civic leaders.



Berat, Albania

Initially, twelve non-profit partners from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia were interested in exchanging views and working towards closer cooperation. At the first meeting in Sarajevo they agreed upon extending their work in the cultural heritage sector beyond their own borders, and establish links with other regional and international partners. The twelve NGOs, together with representatives of Cultural Heritage without

Borders, signed a commitment statement to develop and strengthen the regional network, which they named the SEE Heritage Network. 'SEE' not only stands for South East Europe but also stands for 'to see,' to recognise and acknowledge cultural heritage. Soon, heritage organisations from Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania also joined the network. The members agreed to formalise the network and establish legal headquarters in Montenegro to ensure that the

network would be equipped with the proper tools to carry out its mission to preserve and promote the entire region's cultural heritage. Over the years, the Network organised and realised many shared projects and activities.

In 2017, the SEE Heritage Network organised a conference together with Europa Nostra and Europa Nostra Serbia, with the support of the EU Creative Europe Programme. The main subject of the gathering was to

One of the many SEE Heritage Network projects was their European Union supported project for developing a new regional Cultural Route of post-World War II Monuments in South East Europe.

The project WWII-MONUMENT SEE was carried out from November 2018 to June 2019. Locations of the project were Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia. These monuments, mostly built after World War II

on the territory of former Yugoslavia and Albania, are not only memorials of the fight against fascism, but also exceptional art works.

Based on individual assessments in each of the countries, a joint regional appraisal of post-World War II monuments in South East Europe was made, entitled 'Guidelines for developing a cultural route dedicated to post-World War II monuments in South East Europe.'

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



Kuršumlija Mosque, Maglaj, Bosnia and Herzegovina

discuss the implications of the cooperation project *Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe* (CHCFE) for South East Europe. The research demonstrated, with facts and data, the multiple benefits of *heritage* for *Europe's* economy, society, *culture* and the environment. The report also presented policy recommendations on how to tap into *heritage's* full potential. For several days, more than 150 experts and stakeholders from across Europe discussed an integrated approach to heritage in relation to sustainable development in South East Europe.

The conference not only highlighted the importance of regional cooperation, openness and solidarity. It also made clear that cooperation with other European and wider

international actors in the heritage field is essential. Especially in facing serious threats to heritage in the region, international support is vital for success. The cooperation between South East Europe and the rest of Europe and the European Union should be much more prioritised in the coming years. The equal-level exchange is maybe more important than ever in these days of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is not a one-way street in which the 'western' heritage world provides answers and funds to South East Europe. The new perspectives, innovative practices and creative solutions from the South-Eastern part of Europe are essential for finding new ways for a heritage-led regeneration in the whole of Europe and beyond.

The SEE Heritage Network has more than thirty members:

- Albanian National Trust, ambulance Albania
- Albanian Heritage Foundation, try Albania
- Association for Development of Cultural Tourism - ADCT, Albania
- MJAFT! Movement, Albania
- Butrint Foundation, Albania
- Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organization, Albania
- Cultural Heritage without Borders / CHwB/, Albania
- Cultural Heritage without Borders / CHwB/, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- OSMJEH ZENE, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- NVO Mozaik, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- NVO Kupreška visoravan, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Incentive Network for Cultural Heritage /INCH/, Bulgaria
- GENIUS LOCI, Croatia
- 4 GRADA DRAGODID, Croatia
- PRO TORPEDO Rijeka, Croatia
- Zgoda, Croatia
- Cultural Heritage without Borders / CHwB/, Kosovo
- EC MA NDRYSHE, Kosovo
- Heritage - Association for the Care and Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Macedonia
- Open Society Institute - Macedonia, Macedonia
- Society for Cultural Development BAUO, Montenegro
- EXPEDITIO - Center for Sustainable Spatial Development, Montenegro
- Notar - Centre for Preservation and Promotion of Kotor Documentary Heritage, Montenegro
- Center for Cultural Heritage Projektor, Montenegro
- Transylvania Trust, Romania
- Association for Rehabilitation of the Cultural Heritage ARCH, Serbia
- Civic Association SUBURBIUM, Serbia
- Europa Nostra Serbia, Serbia
- Fine Art and Craft, Serbia
- SAVESUBOTICA, Serbia
- Scenatoria, Serbia

Unity in Diversity?

The Shared History of South East Europe

Finding common ground in the cultural heritage of South East Europe is as easy as it is difficult. The clichéd Unity in Diversity slogan of the European Union is nowhere more evident and elusive than in South East Europe. There are few regions in the world where so much effort and time were spent in making small differences look large and insurmountable. At the same time, new generations are crossing cultural, linguistic and political borders to forge a new future. Interpreting the history of the region tends to be biased and full of preconceived ideas and stereotypes.

struggle of Nicosia, the last divided capital city in Europe; and the Brutalist architecture of the socialist and communist era. This article follows the meandering trail of shared cultural heritage in South East Europe.

The history of South East Europe and its heritage are extremely complex compared to almost any other region on earth. Although all European countries changed hands, names, alliances and borders at some point in time, South East Europe easily takes the lead.

of Italy, and of the Illyrian Provinces of the French Empire, the Austrian Kingdom of Dalmatia, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In World War II, the city was annexed by the Italians, liberated by the Partisans, re-occupied by the Germans, who made the city part of the Independent State of Croatia, liberated again by the Partisans, included in post-war Socialist Yugoslavia, and since 1991, part of Croatia. No wonder the cultural heritage of this region is a multi-layered, complicated and incomplete puzzle. How to bake one cake with so many different ingredients? In this article we make an effort to cover some of the common ground of South East Europe.

The Via Egnatia
(photo by Philipp
Pilhofer)

In South East Europe, any reference to a shared history is bound to meet with profound scepticism. There is almost no subject imaginable without some form of political or ethnic controversy. However, over this vast chasm of disagreement, some bridges built on shared heritage can be discovered. Supporting and strengthening the foundations of these bridges is the challenge that needs to be met. In other articles in this magazine, we discuss the related difficulties of history education in the Balkans; the continued

For instance, let us take a closer and by no means complete look at just one city, Split on the Dalmatian coast. Split was founded as a Greek colony, it became a Roman city and then a Byzantine town. Then the city became part of the Republic of Venice, of the Kingdom of Croatia, an independent free city, part of the Habsburg Monarchy, and of the Venetian Republic again. Contrary to most of South East Europe, Split stayed out of the hands of the Ottoman Empire. It did become part of the Kingdom



The Roman Theatre in Plovdiv, Bulgaria (photo by MrPanyGoff)



Felix Romuliana is the UNESCO-listed Palace of Emperor Galerius, Serbia (photo by Jsphotomorgana)



ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL ROOTS

Once, the Roman Empire covered all the countries which are the subject of this South East Europe magazine, from Slovenia to Cyprus, from Romania to Albania. The Via Appia led straight from Rome to Brindisi where the Adriatic Sea could be relatively easily crossed to Dyrrhachium (present-day Durrës in Albania). Then you travelled on one of the most important roads connecting Rome to the eastern part of the Mediterranean, the Via Egnatia,

first to Thessaloniki and finally to Byzantium (up to 330 CE) or Constantinople (330 to 1453 CE). Another Roman road, the Via Militaris, started at Singidunum (present-day Belgrade) and led through Philippopolis (Plovdiv in Bulgaria) and Adrianopolis (Edirne in Turkey) to also reach Byzantium, covering almost 1,000 kilometres. For centuries the region was one of the most important and central parts of the empire, and one of its prime sources for soldiers. The physical and linguistic legacy of the Romans in South East Europe can still be found everywhere in the region. In Croatia we find the famous amphitheatre in Pula, the Palace of Diocletian in Split and the ancient city of Salona. Serbia is the region of origin of no less than seventeen Roman emperors, including Constantine, the founder of Constantinople and the ruler who made Christianity legal and introduced religious tolerance. The famous Belgrade

The contested sculpture of Alexander the Great in Skopje, North Macedonia



The Legacy of Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) was the example of accomplishment to which many Roman emperors held up a mirror. This Macedonian Greek had conquered the known world at such a young age, it was difficult to follow in his footsteps. He was culturally part of the Hellenic World – Aristotle was for a period his tutor and he read Homer’s “Iliad” with enthusiasm, but his absolutist Macedonian kingdom was bitterly opposed by many Hellenic city states. Although Alexander and his family had their roots firmly in South East Europe, the young ruler has relatively little influence over the region as a whole. Alexander’s lust for conquering was always directed due east to Anatolia and south of the Mediterranean to Egypt and the Middle-East in a search for revenge of the Persian sack of Hellenic shrines in 480 BCE. However, the shadow cast by Alexander the Great is long and even reaches the modern world. For many years, the legacy of Alexander was part the bitter dispute between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece, who both claimed to be his country of origin. One of the most visible aspects of the diplomatic row was the giant statue of Alexander erected in the centre of Skopje. The statue was part of Project Skopje 2014 – a large-scale refurbishment of the capital city with hundreds of statues, decorated bridges and triumphal arches created to instil national pride in Macedonian history, real and imagined.

As part of the road to reconciliation, an agreement was reached on the country’s claims and name, and the removal of the oversized statue. The dispute was officially settled on June 17, 2018, when the leaders of both countries ratified the Treaty of Prespes, named after the lake whose shores hosted the signing ceremony. Since February 2019, the country is officially known as North Macedonia, hopefully opening the door to an European Union accession application, which the Greeks had blocked. Alexander the Great can now slowly return to his ancient roots and no longer be a pawn in a modern game of political chess.

Belgradchik Fortress in Bulgaria is a site which combines Roman roots with Bulgarian, Ottoman, French and English architectural elements (photo by Yanko Malinov)

Fortress in its capital city rests on Roman foundations. The famous Eastern Roman emperor Justinian was born in Tauresium in what is now North Macedonia. Plovdiv in Bulgaria has one of the world's best-preserved ancient Roman theatres, which is still in use today. Every country in South East Europe has important Roman heritage within its borders. The Romans still connect South East Europe and its diverse cultures today.

The last emperor to rule a unified Roman Empire spanning the Mediterranean was Theodosius from Spain, who died in 395. During his reign, Christianity had become the official religion of the Empire. The Romans had suffered major setbacks through a pandemic, an economic crisis and increasing pressure from invading tribes mainly the Goths. The new border between an empire in the East and an empire in the West was drawn right through the middle of South East Europe.

At first, the Eastern Roman Empire, or Romania (*The Land of the Romans*) as it became



known or Byzantium the name under which it is often referred today, continued after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476. They saw themselves as the only true Romans and heirs. They even managed to recapture much of the Western Empire under Justinian I (527-565). For centuries, Byzantium helped to form and shape South East Europe culturally, artistically, economically and religiously. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 ended the Empire but the flood of scientists and scholars travelling from the east to seek refuge in the west brought with them most of the knowledge of the ancient world that had been preserved

in Constantinople and elsewhere in the Empire, to add to that part of the ancient heritage that had already been transmitted by Greeks to Arabs and through Jews in Spain to the West.

The deep roots of this shared and interdependent heritage can help Europe to rediscover common ground between South East Europe and the countries in the West, to embrace more fully a shared history, based on the same foundation, dating back thousands of years, when France, Serbia, Romania, Spain, Albania and most of the United Kingdom and a substantial segment of Germany were all part of the same empire.



The Roman Amphitheatre of Durrës, Albania (photo by Sindela rapi)

7 Most Endangered The Roman Amphitheatre in Durrës in Albania

Dyrrhachium was an important Roman harbour city. The Via Egnatia connected the town to Constantinople. As a thriving Roman city, the population enjoyed their entertainment and the Amphitheatre, situated in the centre of present-day Durrës, is one of the largest and most important of its kind in South East Europe, and is the only one in Albania. Dating back to the 2nd century AD, the monument was only rediscovered in the 1960s and it is still partially buried today. Due to its late discovery, it has endured chaotic urban planning, which had caused its continued deterioration. The Amphitheatre was listed among 'The 7 Most Endangered' heritage sites in Europe in 2013.

In 2016, the initial phase of the project to restore it was successfully concluded. The nearly 10-month intervention consisted of the demolition of three residential structures located in the inner part of the site. The second phase includes the removal of houses on the eastern side and the complete uncovering of the arena.



The Ottoman district in Skopje, North Macedonia

OTTOMAN LEGACY

Most of South East Europe were once, for a longer or shorter time, part of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman architecture and its cultural influence can be found in almost every part of the region, from small villages to large towns. In Sarajevo, Skopje, Sofia or Belgrade, for instance, Ottoman history can easily be discovered in the very heart of the city. Berat in Albania is famous for its houses of the Ottoman period. In other cities, the Ottoman heritage is nowadays less pronounced than it was once, such as Tirana or Prishtina. Starting from the late middle-ages until 1912,

towards the end of their rule over the Balkans, the Ottomans built more than 20,000 buildings: mosques, schools, bathhouses, soup kitchens, monumental bridges, impressive fortifications, and mausoleums for military or spiritual leaders.

The Ottomans' defeat was followed by the rule of Christian governments and an estimated 98% of the Ottoman heritage disappeared. This large-scale destruction of cultural heritage hardly made the news in the rest of Europe. Even today, not enough research is being done to preserve and protect this artistic and architectural heritage.



The Netherlands Institute in Turkey

Researcher Machiel Kiel in the 1960s



The Mostar Bridge

The beautiful and important Mostar Bridge was built in 1566 by Hayruddin, a student of the famous architect Sinan (who built the bridge over the River Drina in Višegrad) during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. The bridge was destroyed on 9 November 1993 during the War in Bosnia & Herzegovina. It was a deliberate destruction of shared cultural heritage, a symbol the peaceful co-existence of Muslims, Christians and Jews. The Stari Most or 'Old Bridge' literally and symbolically bridged a melting pot of diverse communities typical of South East Europe. The reconstructed bridge was restored with the presence of people and organisations from around the world and inaugurated on 23 July 2004.

The Mostar Bridge after restoration (photo by Bernard Gagnon)

The Mostar Bridge after its destruction in 1997 (photo by Npatm)

*Archive photos made by Machiel Kiel: nit-istanbul.org/kielarchive

Ivo Andrić in front of 'his' Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge of Višegrad



The Bridge on the Drina

The Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge of Višegrad stretches its elegant stone arches across the Drina River in Bosnia & Herzegovina, on the border with Serbia. In spring, the river is a wild and fast streaming force of nature, powerfully pushing past the eleven pier foundations. The 16th-century masterpiece by architect Mimar Sinan, a Janissary from Asia Minor the most prominent architect of the Ottoman Empire, is a perfect symbol of the shared heritage and the troubled history of the countries that make up South East Europe, and especially the countries that once made up Yugoslavia. It embodies the centuries of co-existence between

different communities across time and space. It is no wonder that the UNESCO-listed bridge has been destroyed, replaced, blown up, rebuilt, bombed and reconstructed during its long history.

Most recently, in 1992, at the start of the Bosnian War, the bridge and the town of Višegrad were the scenes of a ruthless campaign of ethnic cleansing, killing thousands of Muslim Bosniaks, including women and children. Similar and even worse events took place in Srebrenica, in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, in July 1995. It is hard to imagine what can heal these wounds. Building bridges

between communities after a war is a daunting task. Many demons of the past have yet to cross the bridges of reconciliation. The memorial to come to terms with what happened in Višegrad, for instance, is still vandalised regularly.

For many people outside of the region, the deeply culturally and ethnically motivated conflicts, wars and insurgencies of the Yugoslav Wars (1991-2001*) are difficult to comprehend. To make sense of it all, people turn to *Na Drini Cuprija* (*The Bridge on the Drina*) by Ivo Andrić (1892–1975). Andrić was a Yugoslav diplomat and author, born in Bosnia when it was still part of

The bridge over the Drina in an old coloured photograph





The bridge in 1943, blown up by German Nazi troops



EUROPEAN UNION PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

The European Union Prize for Literature (EUPL) has been awarding prizes to authors since 2009. The consortium of the European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF), the European Writers' Council (EWC) and the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) select winners from each of the 41 countries currently involved in the Creative Europe programme. This is done on a rotating schedule in such a way that each of the participating countries will select a winning author every three years.

The prize puts the spotlight on the creativity and diverse wealth of Europe's contemporary literature in the field of fiction, promotes the circulation of literature within Europe and encourages greater interest in non-national literary works.

The Prize is financed by the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission to promote cross-border mobility of those working in the cultural sector; to encourage the transnational circulation of cultural and artistic output; and to foster intercultural dialogue.

euprizeliterature.eu

the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A master at observing the human condition, he described the different ethnic and religious communities imprisoned by their past and traditions. *The Bridge on the Drina* (1945) tells the fictional but ever-so-real stories of generations of people living in Višegrad. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature (1962).**

The population of Višegrad is a mixed community of Muslims, Christians, Roma and Jews from all kinds of different social and ethnic backgrounds. Andrić's book follows the trials and tribulations of different generations in the city and the villages on both sides of the river. He links their life stories to the bridge's ever-changing fate,

from its construction by a once kidnapped Christian boy (which was the practice in recruiting Janissaries) who became a Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire to World War I. Weddings and funerals, murders and dramatic suicides, gambling debts and drunken adventures, mysterious disappearances and executions, sabotage and destruction: the novel tells a rollercoaster story spanning three and a half centuries. The writer changes perspectives quickly, introduces many new characters, only to lose them again in the flowing narrative. This is not their story; they are just pawns on the chessboard of time, humanity, and nature, and all the different ways they cross paths. The book sheds light on the complicated relationship between the

communities over time much better than a relation of factual events would be able to do. To use an analogy, *The Bridge on the Drina* opens a car's hood and shows us the complex machinery underneath.

* With the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement on 13 August 2001

** The Nobel Prize for Literature winners from South East Europe are also reflective of the complex history of the region. Ivo Andrić won as a Yugoslavian and wrote in Serbo-Croatian. Giorgos Seferis (1900-1971) was a Greek who won the Award in 1963 and wrote in Greek but he was born in the Ottoman Empire, Elias Canetti (1905-1994) who was the recipient in 1981, was born in Bulgaria, lived in the UK and wrote in German. Herta Müller (recipient 2009) was born in a German speaking community in Romania in 1953 and lives in Germany. Odysseas Elytis (1911-1996), who won in 1979, wrote in Greek.



The bridge in 1915



Gjirokastra Castle
Clock Tower



Lolomani house



7 Most Endangered The Historic Centre of Gjirokastra, Albania

The Historic Centre of Gjirokastra was shortlisted for the 7 Most Endangered programme of Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute in 2018. The ancient city has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2005. The listing includes social and public buildings, places of worship, as well as residences, all harmoniously composed in an outstanding historical urban landscape. The core of the Centre is the old Ottoman bazaar with shops dating back to the 17th and 18th century. The historical and panoramic cityscape is completed by a surrounding protected area, comprising eight neighbourhoods, which acts as a buffer zone.

The Historic Centre of Gjirokastra is threatened by a controversial Bypass Road project which will seriously damage the structural and visual integrity of the city. Uncontrolled urban

development is another threat. Out of 615 listed monuments in the Historic Centre of Gjirokastra, more than half are subjected to illegal or out of context constructions, while 169 are in critical condition or risk of collapse, according to a study published in 2016.

The nominator of the Historic Centre of Gjirokastra to the '7 Most Endangered' programme is the Gjirokastra Foundation.

Since 2001, the Gjirokastra Foundation has tirelessly worked to conserve the city. The Foundation has supported the revitalisation of its historic centre through the introduction of the best principles of safe-guarding and with a community centered approach. In 2021, they won a European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award in the category Dedicated Service.



190 articles and 11 books about it.

Archive photos
by Machiel
Kiel



The Netherlands Institute in Turkey is a centre of scientific and historical research. Since its establishment in 1958, the institute, now housed in a spacious building in Beyoğlu in Istanbul, has been doing substantial archaeological and historical fieldwork. One of the most striking projects of the institute is the brainchild of one of the former directors of the organisation, Prof. Dr. Machiel Kiel. Ever since the early 1960s, Kiel has focussed on the study of Ottoman monuments in the Balkan countries. He wrote more than

Fourty years of fieldwork, combined with research in libraries throughout Europe and the United States, and long years of intensive research in the Ottoman archives, have led to an enormous wealth of knowledge and documentation. The inventory of the still existing Ottoman monuments in the Balkans is now largely complete. The Netherlands Institute in Turkey started digitising and publishing Kiel's photographic archive in September 2011.* It was mostly created between 1960 and 1990 and contains many photos and drawings of monuments that have since disappeared.

Kiel's work serves as a permanent reminder for cultural tolerance and the importance of shared history.



The 11th-century Baška tablet from Croatia with Glagolitic script

THE CYRILLIC ALPHABET

The story of the Cyrillic alphabet is a truly European story. Unfortunately, for many years, the alphabet has been used not as a beautiful example of shared cultural heritage, but as a divisive element, spelling trouble in the fragile cooperation in South East Europe.

How did it all begin?

Constantine and Michael, two brothers from a military family in Thessaloniki (then in Greek-speaking Romania, now in present-day Greece) already had extensive religious and scholarly careers when they embarked on a daunting quest. To make the word of God and Orthodox

Christianity more accessible for Slavic peoples of central Europe, they set out to Great Moravia (an empire in what we now consider as central Europe) to translate relevant parts of the bible in Slavic languages. It was a revolutionary concept as at the time, the last half of the 9th century, the Roman Church recognised only three official languages in Christianity: Roman, Greek and Hebrew. The Greek Church was less strict, which is why the idea of translation into Slavonic was welcomed. The brothers quickly realised they needed a new alphabet which was better suited than the Latin script to capture Slavic languages in a written form. Constantine devised a new script, Glagolitic or Old Slavic, with letters that fit the Slavic linguistic needs adequately. The design was related to the Greek alphabet, with added letters for sounds not found in that language.

At first, success appeared to be short-lived. The dream of a Slavic script seemed to be destined to become a historical

footnote. After the death of the two brothers, who were by then known by their adopted monastic names of Cyril and Methodius, the alphabet fell from grace and their disciples were forced to flee. However, Emperor Basil of Romania and Eastern Roman Emperor, and then Emperor Boris 1 of Bulgaria welcomed the refugees from Great Moravia. Boris was instrumental in adopting and adapting the Glagolitic alphabet, which perfectly fitted his political ambitions. The Cyrillic alphabet, named after brother Cyril, was born. In 1880, both brothers were elevated to sainthood in the Orthodox Church. Even the Catholic Church embraced their importance when they were officially proclaimed co-patrons of Europe by Pope John Paul II a century later. Statues and frescoes of the saintly brothers can be found across South East Europe.

The alphabet is still widely used today by more than 300 million people, including Russians and Ukrainians. Bulgaria is the

'The Yard of the Cyrillic Alphabet' private open-air museum in Pliska, Bulgaria



only country in the European Union which officially uses the script. In Romania, the *Cyrillic* alphabet was replaced by a Latin-based *Romanian* alphabet in the 1860s. Elsewhere in the Balkans, the use of the alphabet is more common in one country than the next. Since 1908, Albania only uses Latin script. In Slovenia, the situation is much the same. In Serbia, a *Cyrillic* alphabet designed by Vuk Karadžić in 1818 has been officially in use ever since. North Macedonia also uses a standardised version of Cyrillic since 1945. Latin and Cyrillic alphabets enjoy equal status under the Constitution of Montenegro, but the Latin script seems to be more widely used.

In other countries of South East Europe, the attitude toward Cyrillic is more complex and unfortunately often political. In Croatia, the use of Cyrillic by the Serbian minority in Vukovar has led to anti-Cyrillic protests since 2013. During the Balkan Wars, books written in Cyrillic were destroyed and valuable cultural heritage was demolished. In Kosovo, wedged between Albanian and Serbian influence, the situation is extremely sensitive and complex. In 2018, for instance, the Kosovo Prime Minister sent back an official

transcript of a meeting with the Serbian government as it was only written in Cyrillic. In Bosnia & Herzegovina, the use of the Cyrillic alphabet is also cause for discourse, especially in Republika Srpska, one of the two entities which make up the country (the other is the Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina). The Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks decided after the Balkan Wars that Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian are the country's official languages. Latin and Cyrillic scripts are constitutionally equal but the status quo is still contested.

Unfortunately, the Cyrillic alphabet is not the only linguistic issue in the dark debate feeding on the same nationalistic ideas which have torn the Balkans apart before. For instance, most experts from the Balkans agree that Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian and Montenegrin are one polycentric language with different names. In her book *Language and Nationalism* published in 2010, linguist Snježana Kordić argues that what was once called Serbo-Croatian (or Croatian-Serb) is similar to English, which has different characteristics in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia but it should still be considered the same language.



In South East Europe, languages and alphabets are too often dragged into debates of division and conflict. The essence of any language, spoken or written, is to communicate and to build bridges between people, cultures and nations. For the future of the region, it is vital that the diversity of its shared linguistic heritage be seen as a strength, not a weakness. The cultural heritage of the Cyrillic alphabet and the rich diversity of languages and dialects should be valued across South East Europe and its long and treasured history should be above and beyond politically or ethnically motivated actions.

Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius, painted by Serbian artist Uroš Predić (1857–1953)

Bulgarians celebrating the day in Thessaloniki (1906)



May 24 is the Day Of Slavonic Alphabet, Enlightenment and Culture in Bulgaria (officially: The Day of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius, of the Bulgarian alphabet, education and culture and of Slavic literature). It is one of the very few national days in the world celebrating cultural achievement, literature and spirituality.



Radimlja Necropolis
in Bosnia and
Herzegovina (photo
source: Jag har tagit
bilden själv)

Neum Necropolis
in Bosnia and
Herzegovina (photo
by Anto)

Stećak in Belgrade
(photo by Orjen)

Durmitor in
Montenegro (photo by
JYB Devot)

STEĆCI

The large standing limestone cross shows a roughly hewn figure of a man in a short dress. He seems to hold up his large right hand in a greeting, the other hand relaxing on his hip. Next to him floats a bow and arrow. A smaller figure can be seen next to his legs. Next to the cross we find what look like condensed, solid sarcophagi with similar imagery. Other gravestones show vines with grapes around a cross-like sword. The carved tombstones of the Radimlja necropolis in Bosnia & Herzegovina are very well preserved. More than 70,000 of these late medieval gravestones, or Stećci as they are known, remain today in Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Croatia. Some of them are in a bad shape and just reduced to stones in a field

but many still show unique imagery of people, dragons, horses and geometrical figures, and even texts.

They are exceptional and unique witnesses of the creativity and spirituality of South East Europe, but also share commonalities with other medieval grave monuments across the region and beyond. They are truly shared European heritage and some of the finest examples of medieval tombstones to survive up to the present day in their original location. Some researchers even see a clear connection to traditions dating back to Greek, Roman and even neolithic times. The stones are not just grave markers, they are part of the local history and folklore, of fairytales, customs and superstitions. Many in the region still believe that bad luck

will befall to whoever moves them, a sentiment which may have been instrumental in preserving them. The Stećci have inspired poets, writers, filmmakers, painters and other artists.

Since 2016, a selection of 28 of these Stećci graveyards (with some 4,000 tombstones) are encribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, one of the very few transnational listings.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that much of the religious and ethnic origins of the Stećci still remains mysterious and unclear, they are at the centre of discussions of national identity and culture. It is clear that these carved medieval tombstones are part of Europe's rich and diverse heritage and do not belong to just one culture, religion, country or ethnicity.

MINORITIES

The people living in South East Europe often moved from one region to another, triggered by natural disasters, societal changes, economic opportunities, conflicts or persecutions. Sometimes, the people did not move at all, but the borders did. Others led a nomadic life migrating from one pasture to the next, unaware of territorial or political changes. The region is a melting pot of cultures, peoples, and religions. Minorities in one country can be majorities in another, and the people you culturally identify with may not, historically or genetically, be connected to you in the way you imagined or were told. For instance, DNA research has proven that most peoples living in the Balkans today are very closely related, but the socially and ethnically charged environment makes it easy to play on nationalistic feelings and encourage division.

However, if we take a helicopter view, one of the most distinctive aspects of the shared heritage of South East Europe is precisely the fact that every country in the region has substantial minorities of other countries. The cultural heritage of each community is mixed, blended, stirred and shaken. We find Serbians in Croatia and Croatians in Serbia, Romanians in Serbia, Bulgarians in North Macedonia, and Albanians in Montenegro and Serbia and so forth. Some minorities live in the border areas of several countries with transnational bonds that span centuries. Researching origin stories of the different peoples of South East



Romanian shepherd from Zăbal (1852) by Théodore Valerio

Vlach woman in Vërtop, Albania (source: orientalreview.org)



Vlachs during an annual festival in Aspropotamos, Greece (source: orientalreview.org)

Europe is like going down an endless rabbit hole which rarely leads to clarity on the region's cultural heritage. The Gordian knot of local history soon becomes impossible to untangle.

An example of this complicated mix are the **Vlachs** or **Wallachians** as they are also known. Wallachia is still the name of one of the regions of modern Romania, with the capital city Bukarest, but the name and its people have a long and complex history that takes us all the way back to antiquity and across South East Europe

and beyond. In, and after, the Roman Empire the name was used to describe any Romanised tribe who spoke some form of Latin. That is why we recognise the same terminology in Wales and Wallonia. Obviously, the name Romania is also directly related to the Roman roots of the region. Tranquillus Parthenius (1490–1571), a 16th-century 'European' scholar who studied at Dubrovnik, Padua, Vienna, Ingolstadt and Leipzig, linked the two names when he wrote: "*Valachi nunc se Romanos vocant (Nowadays, the Wallachians call themselves Romans).*"



Vlach dance in Serbia (source: orientalreview.org)

Nowadays, the term 'Vlachs' could include all Balkan Romance-speaking peoples who live south of the Danube, including native ethnic groups, such as the Aromanians and the Megleno-Romanians. They are an important cross-border minority with a long and proud history. They have founded various institutions, universities, theatres, archives and cultural organisations. There are Vlach minorities in Bulgaria, Albania, Greece and North Macedonia and across the Balkans. In Serbia, for instance, more than 35,000 declare themselves ethnic Vlachs, close to 50,000 speak the Vlach language. Others declare themselves as Vlachs from Romania. Some speak Vlach but declare themselves Serbs. A small group calls themselves specifically Aromanians. Add to that the high number of mixed marriages and any discussion on who are the 'real' Vlachs is dead in the water.

Other minorities, such as the Roma and the Jews, can also be found in the whole region, and their shared heritage across borders can be used as bridges between communities in South East Europe.



Sarajevo's Ashkenazi Synagogue (photo by Michał Huniewicz)

Jews have lived in the region since Roman times. In the 15th century, many Jews were forced to flee from the Spanish and Portuguese inquisition and the discrimination and persecution in the rest of western Europe. Many found a new home in South East Europe. Although Jews faced some form of intolerance or bigotry everywhere in Europe, the refugees were mostly welcomed in the region, which was in part under Ottoman rule. For centuries, large Jewish communities could flourish in the cities of South East Europe, mainly Thessaloniki, Sarajevo, Izmir and Istanbul.

All this started to shift to the dark side in the late 19th century ending in the horrors of the Nazi genocide. Some countries in the region were completely occupied by the Nazis and race laws were immediately implemented. The Sajmište concentration camp, just across the Sava River in Belgrade, was one of the most notorious camps of World War II. In 1942, the commander of the Security Police and Gestapo in Serbia famously claimed that Serbia was free of Jews.

As in all nations, collaboration with the Nazis was widespread in South East Europe. At the same time, in many communities, both Christians and Muslims, tried to help the Jews. In Albania, for instance, many protected the Jewish community and welcomed refugees following an ancient honour system, *Besa* or pledge of honour.

After the war, the small groups of Jews who had survived the Holocaust, emigrated to Israel or the United States. Nowadays, South East Europe has a very small Jewish minority of several thousands.



Sephardic Jews in traditional clothes



Roma had made their home in South East Europe from the 12th century onwards. The history of Roma is a long story of persecution, discrimination and marginalisation. In many countries in the region, Roma were hardly even seen as citizens. In Romania, for instance, from the 1350s until far into the 19th century, Roma were literally enslaved, owned by the state, by monasteries and by the aristocracy. The slave owners had complete control from birth, through marriage, and until death. Also in other countries across the region, and almost independent of time and place, Roma were victims of

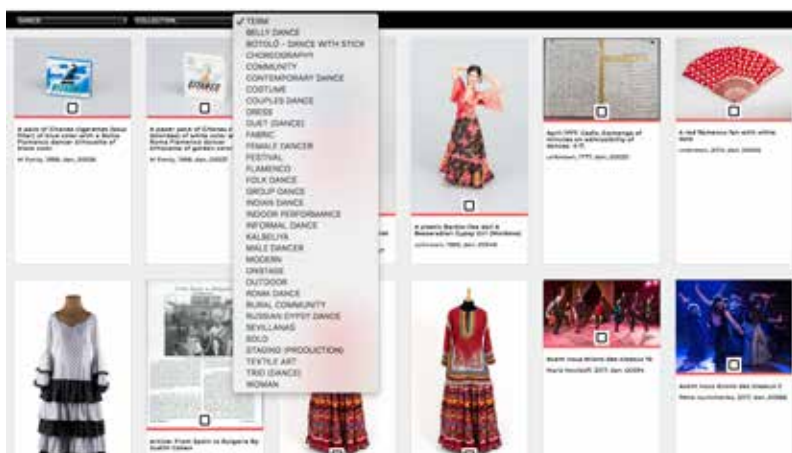
injustice and oppression. During World War II more than half a million Roma and Sinti were murdered, a fact which was only fully acknowledged in 1982.

Times have changed, but many countries in South East Europe still perform poorly in securing and protecting the human rights of Roma. Despite the trauma of such a troubled and horrific past, Roma are now actively working within a European context to show how much they have contributed to Europe’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, from music to art, from dance to literature. Roma culture has deeply influenced

European culture and is an integral part of it.

RomArchive – Digital Archive of the Roma is a project from Germany which won the European Heritage Award Grand Prix for Research in 2019. Roma heritage is now made accessible and visible. Romani Rose is the head of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma. In his moving speech during the Award Ceremony he shared his emotions: *“We want to leave the role of victim behind and take our place in the European community. We have been a part of the countries in which we have lived for hundreds of years and we want to make our contributions accessible. The award shows the appreciation for our culture.”*

ROM-Archive website





National Museum
of Bosnia &
Herzegovina (photo
by Julian Nyča)

I Am The Museum

*How the employees and activists saved the
National Museum of Bosnia & Herzegovina*



One of the stylish
photographs of the
initiative (photo by
Ziyah Gafić)

Most people take it for granted that their country's historical legacy is looked after. We assume that our national museums and archives are taking care of our valuable heritage, and that our priceless collections are protected, safeguarded and well-maintained to be enjoyed by present and future generations. We expect that our governments will make sure that sufficient funding is in place, basically for forever and a day.



And yet, the unthinkable, the unimaginable happened to the National Museum of Bosnia & Herzegovina. The Museum is home to over four million artefacts, making it one of the largest and most important museum collections in South East Europe. It welcomed visitors from across the region and beyond. However, following the formation of today's Bosnia & Herzegovina, it all came to a *screeching halt*.

The government was unable to reach an agreement regarding the financing and upkeep of the Museum and its collections. Deprived of public funding and support, the Museum was forced to shut its doors in 2012, partly from necessity and partly to draw public attention to the Museum's troubles.

Then another remarkable thing happened. Instead of walking away, the employees of the

National Museum of Bosnia & Herzegovina felt it was their responsibility to continue their work. During the three years in which the Museum was closed, they showed up for their everyday shifts, looking after the Museum and its collections. They guarded the Museum night and day under difficult circumstances, protected the priceless artefacts from intruders, and maintained the building as best they could. In solidarity with their dedication, ordinary citizens and activists got seriously involved.

As a result, the *I Am the Museum* initiative was started in the summer of 2015 by Akcija, an independent arts organization based in Sarajevo. The ambitious project, led by programme director Aida Kalender, set out to deepen the public's understanding of the value and the multicultural character of the collections kept in the Museum. They organised philanthropic actions and



The local ceremony for the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award in October 2016 (photo by Spektroom)



Museum back to the top of the agenda of the decision-makers at state level. It was an impressive victory for civil engagement in cultural heritage. It was no surprise that in 2016 the employees and activists of the National Museum of Bosnia & Herzegovina in Sarajevo received the European Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards Grand Prix for Dedicated Service.

The local ceremony for the award in October 2016 was a true celebration of the employees and activists who organised the *I am the Museum* campaign. Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, Secretary General of Europa Nostra, stated: “*Exceptional achievements deserve exceptional awards! And exceptional awards deserve exceptional celebrations! The strong commitment of the employees and activists of the National Museum of Bosnia & Herzegovina to keep this museum active, in very difficult political*



‘occupied’ the Museum with cultural events, concerts, art performances, public debates, and fundraising events. In collaboration with photographer Ziyah Gafić, the activists shared powerful portraits of the Museum’s workers in the exhibition *Guardians of the Museum*.

The campaigns raised awareness across the region, and Europe as a whole, and brought the

Aida Kalender, Program Director of Akcija, during her speech for the local award ceremony (photo by Spektroom)



Maestro Jordi Savall after the concert in the Town Hall of Sarajevo (photo by Jasmin Brutus)



Maestro Jordi Savall was presented with his cartoon drawn by the prestigious French editorial cartoonist Plantu, who also attended the ceremony



and economic circumstances, is a shining example of dedicated service to cultural heritage by professionals and volunteers. Instead of giving up, they decided to act in a positive and constructive way. It is the shared hope of the European Union and Europa Nostra that this prestigious European award will help engineer a lasting political, legal and financial solution which should ensure the long-term future of this Museum.”

This memorable event was enhanced by a short performance given by the renowned Spanish musician Jordi Savall and his ensemble Hespèrion XXI as a special musical tribute to the employees and activists of the National Museum. In the evening, a concert celebrating the traditional musical heritage from the Balkans was organised in the Town Hall of Sarajevo. The iconic heritage building was, after having been a victim of war, reconstructed and re-opened in May 2014. For this

special performance, Savall welcomed guest musicians from Armenia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Spain, as well as four great vocalists – Amira Medunjanin from Bosnia & Herzegovina, Stoimenka Outchikova-Nedialkova from Bulgaria, Katerine Papadopoulou from Greece, and Hungarian-Romanian cello player and singer Tche Limberger.

It was a perfect fit for Savall who, in 2015, received the Helena Vaz da Silva European Award for Raising Public Awareness on Cultural Heritage – instituted by Europa Nostra and its representation in Portugal Centro Nacional de Cultural – for his unique contribution to celebrating the multicultural story of Europe through its rich musical heritage. The stellar performance in the Town Hall truly captured the power of international solidarity that helped the National Museum survive its darkest moments.

ALIPH was created in 2017 as one of the outcomes of the international conference on heritage in danger held in Abu Dhabi in December 2016. On the initiative of France and the United Arab Emirates, the idea to create an international fund to protect heritage in situations of armed conflict became a reality. ALIPH – an acronym that also designates the first letter of the Arabic alphabet – helps with preventive protection to limit the risks of destruction, with emergency measures to ensure the security of heritage, and with post-conflict actions to enable local populations to once again enjoy their cultural heritage. From their headquarters in Châtelaine, Switzerland, close to Geneva, ALIPH has provided funding for the reconstruction of several spaces and storage facilities at the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project contributes to the reconstruction of the Archaeology Department and the Department of Natural Sciences, including the storage rooms by strengthening the conservation of part of its collection. It will also contribute to the protection of the textile collection of the Ethnology Department.

On 31 January 2022, in Paris, ALIPH Executive Director Valery Freland and Europa Nostra’s Secretary General Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen the joint efforts for the protection of cultural heritage especially in (post)conflict areas in Europe & beyond.



The empty site of the demolished National Theatre

The Last Curtain Call

The brutal demolition of the National Theatre in Tirana

Not all heritage sites can be saved. Not all civil society actions to save beloved monuments succeed. Sometimes justice does not prevail and bad, irreversible decisions are made. One of the saddest examples of this is the National Theatre in Tirana, Albania. In the very early morning hours of Sunday, 17 May 2020, a large number of policemen surrounded the Theatre and arrested about 30

artists and civil society activists who have been guarding the monument day-in, day-out for the last two years. In an instant, more than 80 years of memories and cultural significance was bulldozed in a mountain of rubble and dust. Instead of taking the time to examine the legality of their decision, and opening the dialogue with civil society and experts, the Albanian authorities decided

to make use of the last day of the special health emergency measures, taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to destroy the National Theatre in Tirana.

For years a large civic alliance composed of artists, intellectuals, heritage experts and civil society activists – The Alliance for the Protection of the Theatre – had been campaigning for the preservation and renovation of their theatre. The monument, constructed in 1938 by the Italian company *Pater Costruzioni Edili Speciali*, was a remarkably innovative and modern building, which fitted perfectly in the monumental axis created in the 1920s in the heart of Tirana. The theatre used to be an important cultural centre. Now, after its demolition, the Theatre has become a lasting symbol of civil society's will to defend their



The National Theatre in Tirana, before its demolition

heritage and the intangible values connected to it.

Europa Nostra has expressed its support to save the Theatre as early as in 2018, during the European Year of Cultural Heritage, and conveyed its concerns about the planned demolition to the highest authorities of Albania. In 2020, the building was included in the List of 7 Most Endangered Heritage Sites in Europe, an initiative of Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute. The European Commission – through EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth Mariya Gabriel, also expressed its support to the safeguard of all sites included on the List, including the National Theatre in Tirana.

But the people who wanted to tear the building down continued their efforts without any consideration for the protests. The responsibility for the Theatre was transferred to the Municipality of Tirana. Then the decision was made, behind closed doors, to demolish the Theatre by the Municipal Council. Once again, Europa Nostra opposed the decision and called for a constructive dialogue. The next day, EU Commissioner Mariya Gabriel urged the Albanian authorities to engage with civil society and cultural heritage experts before taking any irreversible decisions. Even the President of the Republic, Mr Ilir Meta, submitted a request to the Constitutional Court of Albania to examine the legality of the decision by the Municipal Council to demolish the Theatre.



During the demolition of the National Theatre (photos by the Alliance for the Protection of the Theatre)



Protests during the demolition of the National Theatre

But the coming disaster was unstoppable and the Theatre was destroyed.

After the building was demolished, Europa Nostra condemned the decision in a letter to the EU Ministers of Culture stating that 17 May was a sad day for cultural heritage in Albania and Europe as a whole, a sad day for democracy and the respect of the rule of law and human rights. The European Union Delegation in Albania also expressed their regret via social media platforms.

Europa Nostra urged that the demolition of the Theatre should trigger the EU Ministers of Culture to reiterate that the

protection of cultural heritage, and our cultural and historical memory, represents one of the fundamental EU values. Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, Secretary-General of Europa Nostra and Dr Paolo Vitti, Europa Nostra Board Member and Member of the 7 Most Endangered Advisory Panel, discussed the demolition of the Theatre during television interviews and stressed the importance of the protection of Albanian cultural heritage.

The National Theatre is no longer with us, but it now stands as a strong symbol for civil society's right and duty to protect and preserve our heritage. We should not give up hope as the next time, the battle could be won.



Wonders of Bulgaria

Like most countries in South East Europe, Bulgaria has a treasure trove of cultural heritage – including many UNESCO World Heritage sites – to share with the world. Even though Bulgaria’s tourism industry is economically significant, it does not yet live up to its full potential.



debates and discussions with representatives of municipalities, the government, businesses, tour operators and NGOs resulted in more than 20 new routes for cultural and historical tourism. The campaigners also actively promoted the nomination of Bulgaria's intangible cultural heritage as World Heritage. The tradition of carpet-making in Chiprovtsi was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2014, and the Festival of folklore in Koprivshtitsa was inscribed on the UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in 2016.

Some of the Wonders of Bulgaria are UNESCO World Heritage Sites, such as the Rila Monastery (top, photo by Dennis Jarvis) and the Boyana Church in Sofia (bottom)

The Wonders of Bulgaria campaign increased awareness of the country's natural, built, and intangible heritage in both Bulgaria and abroad. Their efforts coincided with a 20% increase in tourism to Bulgaria in the last seven years alone. The success of the project also attracted international appreciation. In 2018 the initiative won the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award in the

In 2010, campaigners from the national media group Standart initiated the Wonders of Bulgaria to preserve and promote both Bulgaria's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The enthusiastic team led by the founder of the campaign Slavka Bozukova started to

successfully raise international awareness with tours, debates, publications and exhibitions. A series of 18 books titled The Wonders of Bulgaria, written by some of the most renowned historians and archaeologists in Bulgaria, had a total circulation of 350,000 copies. The many

International Forum on the Culture and Business - Together in the Digital World with 'Wonders of Bulgaria' Slavka Bozukova (left), Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, Secretary-general of Europa Nostra (middle) and Mariya Gabriel, the European Commissioner responsible for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education, and Youth (right)



category Education, Training and Awareness-raising.

Slavka Bozukova believes that the initiative is significant for young people: *"This is a meeting between the wonders of Bulgaria in the past and the greatest wonders of our country today - the young people who can carry with their energy and creativity the cultural and historical heritage into the future."*

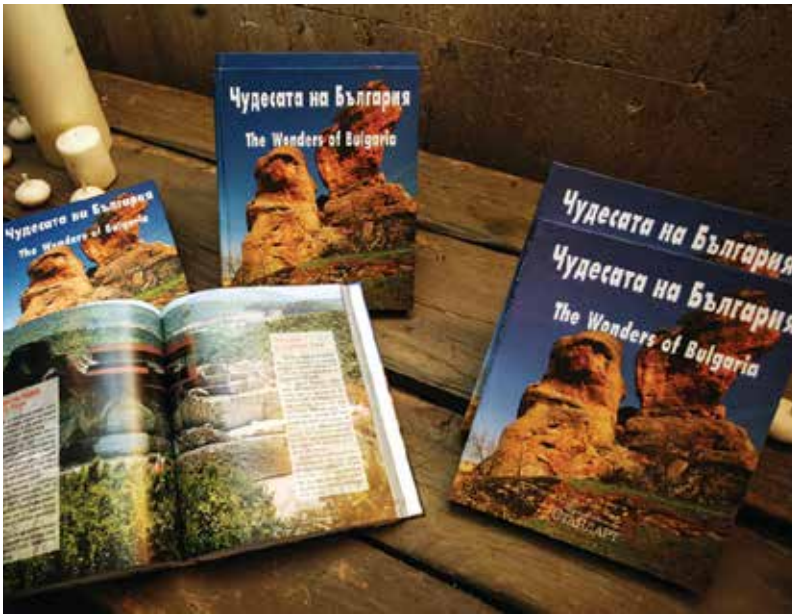
Piet Jaspert, Vice-President of Europa Nostra, has followed the project for many years. In the introduction to the publication *The Legends of the Wonders of Bulgaria*, which commemorates the 10th anniversary of the project, he



Thracian gold in the National Museum of Archaeology

writes: *"Cultural heritage is our living memory, it is a resource for our well-being and pride, it is a powerful catalyst for our future. Investment in culture and cultural heritage helps*

the regeneration of cities and regions. A well-balanced form of a dialogue between tourism and cultural heritage creates the possibility of a better and more sustainable future for



both. A better place to live will always be a better place to visit."

On 31 Augustus, 2021, the University of National and World Economy (UNWE) and the Wonders of Bulgaria Foundation organised a discussion under the name Digital Routes for Cultural and Historical Heritage. It was part of the International Forum on the Culture and Business - Together in the Digital World with the participation of Europa Nostra and Mariya Gabriel, the European Commissioner responsible for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education, and Youth who comes from Bulgaria. During the Forum, Slavka Bozukova underlined that the aim of Wonders of Bulgaria had been to restore and socialise Bulgaria's cultural heritage but that now new steps had to be taken in digitisation and digitalisation. The idea is not just to create a tourist portal or posters for young people but to create something that could unite and educate. The next day, Europa Nostra's honorary



chairman Plácido Domingo gave a spectacular concert in downtown Sofia with Bulgarian operatic soprano Sonya Yoncheva.

The rich and diverse culture of Bulgaria with Thracian, Roman, Greek and Ottoman heritage – to name but a few of the many civilisations which left their traces in the country – is a solid foundation for a heritage-led transformation of Bulgaria. The success of the Wonders of Bulgaria initiative is an excellent case in point for the power of example and is an inspiration for other countries in South East Europe.



Vezhdi Rashidov

One of the early and inspiring supporters of the Wonders of Bulgaria project is the former Bulgarian Minister of Culture Vezhdi Rashidov. For many years the politician and prolific artist has shown a keen interest in ensuring a more substantial presence of Europa Nostra in Bulgaria and, vice versa, for stimulating a more robust input of Bulgaria to the activities of Europa Nostra. His civic engagement in promoting cultural rights and values in Bulgaria and Europe in numerous artistic debates, symposia and biennales proved him to be a forceful defender and promoter of the importance of culture and cultural heritage in Bulgaria. His artistic opus is inspired by the creative genius of the Bulgarian people and is shown to a broad audience across the world.

During his two mandates as Minister of Culture of Bulgaria, he promoted cultural heritage as a key resource for sustainable development and social cohesion. He supported the presentation of Bulgarian art abroad, from the Louvre Museum in Paris, the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and The Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. He was (and still is) dedicated to fighting - both at the national and European level - against looting and illicit trafficking of archaeological artefacts in Bulgaria and elsewhere in Europe and the world.

Europa Nostra counts on his vast expertise and experience, creativity and imagination, and independent mind committed to European values to ensure a much more central place for culture and cultural heritage in Bulgaria.

Artist and politician Vezhdi Rashidov (second from the right) presents his book to (left to right) Piet Jaspaert (Vice-President Europa Nostra), Vesna Marjanovic (Secretary-general Europa Nostra Serbia) and Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović (Secretary-general Europa Nostra)



Living Space

The work of NGO Expeditio in Montenegro

Montenegro has the potential to develop many Cultural Routes

For close to 25 years, the non-governmental organisation Expeditio has helped to develop civil society in Montenegro and South East Europe by promoting sustainable architecture, cultural heritage and urban planning. They advocate an approach to building and

spatial planning practices that includes the care for the natural environment. The construction sector is a major consumer of energy and is responsible for a high level of pollution. Sustainable building and planning practices should not be an exception but a usual

approach in architecture. Not an easy message when the region wants to develop quickly, and without too many checks and balances.

The group is committed to promoting the principles of sustainable development, and



Montenegro's countryside is rapidly changing

organisations working on the wider field of cultural heritage in Montenegro. With the support of the Ministry of Culture of Montenegro, they implemented the project *Research: Organizations in the field of cultural heritage in Montenegro - analysis of the state, needs and conditions for the development* to not only identify the NGOs and informal groups active in the cultural heritage sector but also to assess their needs, encourage cooperation and create an electronic database.

In 2019, EXPEDITIO worked on another project funded by the Ministry of Culture; to create cultural heritage routes through Montenegro and to study its economic and social potential. The *Paths of Heritage* project not only joined the European Cultural Routes network but also assessed how to best promote and present the routes, by creating presentations, organising a round table and printing five publications on the Cultural Routes of Montenegro.

the values and importance of created and natural environments and built heritage, as is clear from the quotation by anthropologist Margaret Mead on their website: “*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world.*” They

work closely together with their partner in the region, the South East Europe Heritage Network (see elsewhere in the magazine).

One of the issues EXPEDITIO realised they needed to address was the lack of good information on all the different



One of the participants of the School4City project Schoolactivities for the School4City project

Cultural Landscapes is another hot issue that EXPEDITIO is actively engaged in. A few years ago, they implemented the EU-funded AGRISCAPE & ME project with the local

cultural Heritage Association *NAPREDAK Gornja Lastva* and the Association of Olive Producers *Boka*. The project contributed to developing sustainable agriculture by

promoting regeneration, conservation and enhancement of the traditional agricultural landscape, as part of the overall cultural landscape.



Some of the post-World War II Monuments in South East Europe



Memorial to the Fallen of the Lješanska Nahija Region in Barutana, Montenegro

Expeditio was one of the leaders of the EU-funded project “Assessments for developing new regional tourism product and cultural route of post-World War II Monuments in South East Europe.” Monuments created after the Second World War in the region represent a significant potential for the development of a regional cultural tourism. These monuments do not only have an exceptional artistic value, they are the result of the complex ideological, philosophical and aesthetic research of architects, sculptors and artists.



SCHOOL4CITY is another project promoting sustainable development. Supported by the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt DBU it brings education about sustainable and livable cities to local schools in Montenegro. The idea was to teach students the basic ideas and principles of sustainable cities, the challenges of urban development, and the best ways to improve the quality of life. For example, during the workshops, students acquired the knowledge and skills on designing a project to improve their living environment, create imaginary buildings, and to co-design their schoolyard. They were encouraged to propose creative ideas in trans-disciplinary topics, such as green cities, smart houses, renewable energy sources, landscape protection, and the preservation of agricultural land.

The overall objective of the project was to teach and inspire students to analyse sustainable development (environmental, economic, socio-cultural context); to explain the importance of long-term planning of resources; to help them understand energy efficiency, and the use of renewable energy and clean



technologies; and to identify the main differences between sustainable and unsustainable tourism development.

The project *ClimCity – Urban Adaptation to Climate Change in Montenegrin Schools* is financed by the Public Work Administration of Montenegro through an EU grant. ClimCity focuses on increasing awareness of the environment and climate change in Montenegro's educational sector. Partner



in the project is the non-governmental organization Eco Logic from Podgorica. One aspect of the project is the workshop *School Garden – An Integral Classroom* aimed at primary school students. By creating school gardens, the children learn about ecology, environmental protection and sustainable development and gain knowledge of how green, urban architecture and planning can help fight climate change.

ClimCity is a new Expeditio EuropeAid project to increase the awareness and capacity of employees in Montenegrin schools to implement the teaching topic of urban adaptation to climate change



The town of Chora,
Amorgos (photo by
Zde)

Throwing Caution To The Wind

Wind turbines threaten the Cyclades' cultural landscape

Sometimes, the best intentions can have disastrous effects. The world badly needs alternatives to fossil fuels to combat climate change but what is the ideal solution in one situation does not necessarily yield the same positive results elsewhere.

All over Europe, wind turbines – sometimes with a wingspan comparable to an Airbus 380 – have been built at an alarming rate. It is the result of a quest

for clean energy that is slowly but surely visually polluting our European cultural landscape, a truly non-renewable asset. It is a difficult balancing act between the necessity of finding green solutions and the deterioration of the sustainability of our countryside. We need an honest discussion about the real carbon footprint of these turbines. What happens to the wind farms when they are at the end of their cycle? Who is responsible for the

clean-up? These are not small structures that can be easily and cheaply removed. The rules and regulations differ in every town, province, and country. Governments stimulate the use of wind turbines but at the same time ignore or underestimate their long term effects.

One of the places where these conflicts have reached a fever pitch are the Greek islands. Elliniki Etairia – Society for

the Environment and Cultural Heritage -has been worried about the development of wind parks on these beautiful South Aegean group of islands for some while, but recently the situation has become more urgent than ever. Although almost all Greek islands are under threat, they decided to nominate five exemplary islands in the South Aegean for the 2021 edition of the 7 Most Endangered Programme of Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute. The nomination draws attention to the immediate danger the wind parks represent for the islands' cultural and natural heritage. The organisation asks for alternative and balanced clean-energy solutions rather than wind parks, together with an in-depth consultation process with local communities and experts.

The Cyclades number about 220 islands. Andros, Delos, Mykonos, Naxos, and Santoríni are the most well-known. Elliniki Etairia has selected Amorgos, Kimolos, Kythira, Sikinos and Tinos as notable examples of the problems which face the Cyclades. Amorgos and Sikinos have also been included in Europa Nostra's Project ENtopia - Our Places in Europe, which celebrates the historic traditions and diversity of small towns, and villages. Some of the restoration projects on the islands have won European Heritage Awards. The preservation of the islands' walking trails won an award in 2018 for their Greek Paths of Culture project. The conservation of Ancient Tower and Adjacent Buildings at Horio-

Aghia Triada on Amorgos won a European Heritage Award in 2010.

All of these islands have been permanently inhabited since ancient times and share a rich natural and cultural history. The population density is relatively small. Sikinos has the smallest population of about 270 and Tinos the largest, almost 9,000. The population of all the islands increases dramatically during the tourist season.

The multi-layered landscape of the Cyclades, admired by people from all over the world, is now in grave danger due to the Greek government encouraging the building of an unjustifiably large number of wind farms. Heavy infrastructure will be necessary to construct, assemble and access the wind turbines. Not only will these parks diminish the landscape's environmental and cultural value, but they also risk threatening the livelihood of many communities. Wind turbines will spread out their large white wings next to archaeological sites, protected nature reserves and as a backdrop to traditional villages.

To illustrate the immensity of the proposal let us look at the numbers. In **Tinos**, three wind turbines have already been constructed and fifteen more are licensed with three more in the works. **Amorgos** is known for its wild and beautiful nature, with an abundance of herbs, a rich indigenous flora and dozens of migrating birds. The government has given permission for installing twenty-one wind turbines and is



The Panagia Hozoviotissa Monastery, Amorgos



Sikinos



Tinos (photo by Eugenie Coumantaros)



Kimolos (photo by Roza24)



Kythira (photo by Dynamo)

examining proposals for another fifty-two, many of them planned within a protected Natura 2000 area.

Tiny **Sikinos** is one of the few islands where the authentic beauty of the Aegean has been preserved unspoiled. Currently, twenty-three wind turbines have been proposed. More than half of **Kimolos** is protected by a Natura 2000 designation. The government has proposed twenty wind turbines, with three within the protected nature area. **Kythira** is not officially part of the Cyclades but it shares many of its characteristics. The island has a rich, varied landscape, and unique architecture preserved through traditional settlements, castles, and monasteries. Four permits have already been

issued with another sixty in the pipeline, some within Natura 2000 protected areas and at a close distance from monuments such as the Holy Monastery of Panagia Myrtidiotissa and Mylopotamos Castle

The number of wind turbines on these five Cycladic islands and hundreds of others will not only change the cultural and natural environment dramatically, but they will also alter the unique microclimates in some with potentially catastrophic effects on the islands' fragile ecosystems. Additionally, on Kythera, the turbines would significantly affect the operation of the 22 million Euro PAGGAIA climate change measuring system of the National Observatory of Athens.

Ellinki Etairia also draws attention to the fact that the existing government plans are simply outdated and do not reflect alternatives and technological innovation. The wind farms that have received preliminary licences produce much more energy than is needed and there are many possibilities for small interventions to increase the output of local sustainable energy. They propose a moratorium on the licensing of wind turbines within Natura 2000 sites. They want investors to submit a bank guarantee so that after the life cycle of the wind turbines, the landscape can be restored.

The local island communities and their political leaders are in full support of Elliniki Etairia and the inclusion of the islands in the 7 Most Endangered programme. They realise that the wind turbines will not only affect the cultural and natural beauty of their islands but also potentially diminish the income from tourism. Being part of the 7 Most Endangered will promote a healthier solution to achieving energy sustainability while protecting the beauty of the Aegean for future generations.



Derelict traditional windmill on Tinos (photo by Eugenie Coumantaros)

Putting Europe's shared heritage at the heart of the European Green Deal

The European Cultural Heritage Green Paper

On 22 March 2021, in close cooperation with ICOMOS and the Climate Heritage Network and with the input of other members of the European Heritage Alliance, Europa Nostra presented the European Cultural Heritage Green Paper. The Paper 'Putting Europe's shared heritage at the heart of the European Green Deal' is supported by the European Investment Bank Institute and the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union. It was presented by its lead author, Andrew Potts, Coordinator of the ICOMOS Climate Change and Heritage Working Group during the online launch event which was attended by over 550 people.

Hermann Parzinger, Executive President of Europa Nostra stated: *"This ground-breaking document demonstrates the relevance of cultural heritage for achieving the ambitious goals of the European Green Deal, launched by the European Commission to make Europe the first carbon-free continent by 2050. The European Green Deal states that 'All EU actions and policies will have to contribute to the European Green Deal objectives'. Our European Cultural Heritage Green Paper gives the response: Count Cultural Heritage in!"*

The Paper correlates the contribution of cultural heritage to all key areas of the European

Green Deal, including Clean Energy, Circular Economy, the Renovation Wave, Smart Mobility, Farm to Fork, Green Finance and a Just Transition, Research and Innovation, Education and Training, as well as Green Deal Diplomacy. It proposes a series of concrete

recommendations both for policy-makers and for cultural heritage stakeholders. Potential conflicts, real or perceived, between heritage safeguarding and European Green Deal action, are also identified, as well as win-win strategies for overcoming these conflicts.



The online launch of the European Cultural Heritage Green Paper (from left to right):

- Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
- Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, Secretary General of Europa Nostra
- Hermann Parzinger, Executive President of Europa Nostra
- Andrew Potts, Project Manager and Lead Author of the Paper, Coordinator of the ICOMOS Climate Change and Heritage Working Group
- Teresa Patricio, President of ICOMOS
- Francisco de Paula Coelho, Dean of the European Investment Bank Institute
- Dace Melbārde, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) of the European Parliament
- Marcos Ros Sempere, Member of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) & Coordinator of the New European Bauhaus Friendship Group of the European Parliament

Making a Difference

Many organisations and individuals in South East Europe have been catalysts for positive change



How can you save heritage sites when the struggles of everyday life get in the way? How can you find the enthusiasm again and again, often against all odds, to try and protect local monuments, traditions or skills? When the local communities require so many things, from better roads to dependable electricity, or medical services, how can you, at the same time, make sure that the heritage is not forgotten or actively destroyed?

* European Economic Area and Norway is a funding mechanism in which Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway contribute to projects in Europe.

Over the years, many organisations and individuals in

South East Europe have been actively doing just that: creating jobs where there were none, preserving customs where they were all but gone, rebuilding and restoring when others wanted to demolish. In this magazine, you have encountered many heritage professionals and volunteers who have accomplished extraordinary things. In this article, we want to shine a light on some of the other organisations and individuals who have made a difference where it counted.

THE TRANSYLVANIA TRUST

When you enter the entrance gate of the Bánffy Castle you feel slightly disorientated for several reasons. Firstly, the enormous complex, located in the village of Bonțida in Transylvania, Romania, looks out of place, like it has been airlifted from Paris or Vienna. Secondly, the spectacular ensemble is immense, built in different architectural styles from Renaissance to Rococo and Neo-Gothic. Thirdly, upon closer inspection, you cannot



Bánffy Castle

Bánffy de Losoncz (1873-1950). During World War II he tried to convince the Hungarian government to abandon their loyalty to the Axis countries, but he was unsuccessful. When the Germans finally retreated from the region, they had not forgotten the role the Count had played and they destroyed and looted Bánffy Castle. Part of the estate was burned down, and the library and archive were lost. This disaster was only the beginning of the cruel fate that awaited the estate. Post-war Romania felt little sympathy for the castle and its noble history.

The abandoned buildings were used as shops, social housing and stables. The local population used the estate as a welcome source of free building materials. Over time, the only thing left was a collection of mostly roofless, derelict and stripped buildings.

Finally, from 1999 onwards, the tide began to turn for the sad ruins of what was once known as Transylvania's Versailles, when the Transylvania Trust Foundation became the guardian

help but wonder why some of the buildings of this important heritage treasure are in such a derelict state.

The estate has been in the possession of the Hungarian Bánffy family since the 14th century. Over the centuries the fortified castle transformed from a Transylvanian stronghold into a stylish and richly decorated palace with receptions halls, a famous library, wine cellars and a Riding School. In 1935, art historian József Biró described

the interior: *“The big, sunny, airy dining hall of the Bonțida Castle, with its porcelain and glass cases, radiate with gaiety, though in its size it resembles a medieval knights hall. The most beautiful rooms are the Maria Theresa, the blue and the yellow hall, the billiard room with its collection of portraits and the library in the bastion.”*

The last owner was the extraordinary politician, cartoonist, writer, opera director and designer Count Miklós



Bánffy Castle

of the castle. The charity was set up by conservation professionals and volunteers in 1996 to conserve and promote Transylvania's built heritage. Most urgent was the restoration of the roof structures. Step by step, more restorations were carried out and plans were made for a sustainable future. In 2001, the Trust launched the Built Heritage Conservation

Training programme and since then students have carried out conservation works on the buildings as part of their training. The programme offers theoretical knowledge followed by direct hands-on workshops in, for instance, consolidation, carpentry, stonemasonry and even the creation of ceramic tiles. It is a smart solution in which the estate is restored, and the students acquire the necessary restoration skills. In 2008, the efforts were awarded the European Heritage Award and since then the programme has further blossomed. By 2021, more than 2,500 trainees (craftsmen and university students) from many European countries and overseas have worked in and on the castle. Year by year, more visitors come, and, despite the temporary setback of the COVID-19 pandemic, the future of the local community looks brighter than ever.

However, it took the villagers of Bonțida some time to get used to the newcomers. Hegedüs Csilla, the President of the Trust, explains in the friendly heritage café in one of the restored buildings: "In the beginning,

there was a lot of mistrust from the local community. The castle was completely ruined and some of the people who had stolen building materials from the estate had to somehow become part of the solution. I am sure there are still three or four people in a local bar that speak badly of us, but most now welcome what we have accomplished here. It is not an easy process as it costs a lot of money to maintain what we have created. The income from visitors and students is not enough and because we are a private foundation it is more difficult to directly access funds. You see, in 2008, the ownership of the castle was given back to the Bánffy family and they have given it to us in loan for 49 years. So, by the time we return the castle to them, it will hopefully be fully restored to its former glory. But the private ownership makes the financing of projects harder. For instance, it is difficult for that reason for the EEA and Norway Grants to help us. They have been able to support us with the restoration of the mill, an important building which is just outside the main gate and therefore not part of the private estate."*



Rimetea houses

Rimetea

The Transylvanian Trust was also instrumental in the restoration of the traditional houses of the small village of Rimetea which is uniquely located under a large, imposing mountain. The local community was brought back to life and tourists to the region have included it in their itinerary.

EEA and Norway Grants

The European Economic Area and Norway is a funding mechanism in which Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway contribute to projects in Europe. This grant allows certain member states in South East Europe to be eligible for support by the EEA and Norway Grants: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Romania and Slovenia.

Investing in culture is one of the main areas in which the EEA and Norway Grants are making a difference in the region. According to the organisation, Europe's rich cultural heritage embodies a common history, which allows us to reflect on, discuss and learn from our past. Through their many programmes, the EEA and Norway Grants help to make culture more accessible and contribute to jobs, skills development, and resilience in local communities.

Besides its intrinsic value, the organisation believes that the cultural sector is an important driver of social cohesion, sustainable development, and economic advancement. Culture contributes to smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth which brings long-term social and economic benefits, especially to local communities.

The EEA and Norway Grants focus their cultural grants on four different challenges:

Increasing investment

Many cultural heritage sites suffer from too little funding. Not only is it cheaper to maintain cultural heritage sites than to restore them – investing and managing cultural heritage can also drive sustainable development, increase cultural tourism, and create new jobs.

Bridging differences

Culture plays an important role in empowering communities, fighting discrimination and promoting human rights. Intercultural dialogue helps people explore what they have in common and promotes mutual understanding.

Increasing stability

Many cultural players are dependent on external funding for their work. Strengthening the capacity of cultural players through increased skills and better networks is essential for increasing the sustainability of the sector.

Driving innovation

Culture can be a driver of economic and social innovation. Cultural entrepreneurship can bridge the gap between creativity, culture and business, i.e., through public-private partnerships.

An extraordinary aspect of the EEA and Norway Grants funding body is that it not only gives money, but believes that the best results can be achieved by linking organisations and creating partnerships with the donor countries. The organisation takes part in the planning and implementation of programmes and projects. Arts Council Norway and the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage are donor programme partners in this specific area and assist organisations interested in participating in projects.



Zoltán Kallós
Museum and
Foundation

Traditional
clothes from the
Zoltán Kallós
collection



ZOLTÁN KALLÓS

In 2017, the renowned Hungarian folklore collector Zoltán Kallós (1926-2018) received not only a European Heritage Award for Dedicated Service but also the Public Choice Award. As Kallós was

Zoltán Kallós in
2016 (photo by
István Bíró)



too weak to travel to the award ceremony in Turku, Finland, European Commissioner Tibor Navracsics travelled to Rascruci in Cluj County, Romania to bring the award to the beloved heritage expert.

Over the last 70 years, Kallós preserved the rich tangible and intangible heritage of the Hungarian, Romanian, Saxon and Roma communities of Transylvania. He collected not just objects and artefacts, he also documented songs, poems, dances, customs and other elements of folklore and culture. Some 14,000 songs that have been collected by Mr Kallós are preserved at the Ethnographic Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Hungarian Heritage House of Budapest, and at the Zoltán Kallós Museum and Foundation, which was founded in 1992 on his family's estate.

Kallós was especially keen to pass on these traditions of music, dance, storytelling and craft to younger generations. He was a key player in the

Táncház movement which was established to revive and teach Hungarian dance traditions to Hungarian communities around Europe. In recognition of its safeguarding efforts, UNESCO enlisted the Táncház movement in its *List of Intangible Heritage of Urgent Safeguarding* in November 2011.

Zoltán Kallós was one of the most prominent and successful folklore collectors of the 20th century. He never gave up despite difficult political circumstances and personal sacrifices. During the local award ceremony in his hometown in Romania, he stated: *"I never worked for the Award or money. I collected these objects, songs, dances and customs for the future. Without this collection, we would be poorer. We would never have heard about these ballads, these songs or of the people that I collected them from. They are very precious. I was doing this for our community, and I hope that somebody will continue the work."*



Eltz Manor, one of Meder's projects, at the beginning of the restoration. The castle was heavily damaged during the Battle of Vukovar in 1991 (photo by Mario Braun)

FERDINAND MEDER

As a conservator and art historian, Ferdinand Meder has dedicated his life to the conservation and restoration of Croatian heritage. He has served as a director at some of the leading heritage institutions in Croatia and he has used his influence to make a significant contribution to the improvement of the restoration and conservation professions. Meder helped to establish the first restoration graduate studies in Croatia and developed and implemented state qualifying exams for conservation and restoration professionals.

Ferdinand Meder was able to find solutions under challenging circumstances with few funds available. His expertise and persistence were central to the restoration of Dubrovnik after the earthquake in 1979. Over the years, in his role as Director of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, he managed to protect and restore monuments that faced demolition. He was able to draw the attention of the international community by linking up with ICOM, ICOMOS, UNESCO, and the



Eltz Manor after restoration (photo by Stjepko Krehula)



Ferdinand Meder receiving the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award Grand Prix from EU-commissioner Tibor Navracsics

Council of Europe. In the 1990s, during the period of military conflict, he helped to safeguard Croatia's cultural heritage which suffered extensive damage and destruction.

Ferdinand Meder was awarded the European Heritage Award Grand Prix for his dedicated service in 2017. During the local award ceremony in the Oris

House of Architecture in Zagreb, Croatia in 2018, a panel discussion was held and the exhibition *Europa Nostra: Sharing Heritage – Sharing Values* was opened. On this occasion, three Europa Nostra Learning Kits were presented by Višnja Kisić and Goran Tomka on the subjects Fundraising, Awareness-Raising & Advocacy, and Citizen Engagement & Education.

The fortified church of Biertan (photo by Daniel Rosca)

Hans-Christian Habermann



HANS-CHRISTIAN HABERMANN

Dr Hans-Christian Habermann (1938) is especially interested in the rich Saxon heritage of Romania and the multicultural history of Transylvania. He realised that in the last years of the Ceausescu dictatorship, the protection of heritage had become very weak, and that public awareness of its importance was at a very low level.

He was born in Bucharest, Romania in 1938 into a rich Saxon family from Sibiu (formerly known as Hermanstadt) in Transylvania, but fled from Communist Romania with his family in 1948. Since the fall of Communism in 1990, he has dedicated his time to preserving and restoring Saxon heritage. This campaign has included the restoration and conservation of several fortified churches and many other historic buildings, such as Tartiau, BIRTHALM, the Brukenthal Museum and the Bishop's Palace in Sibiu. In total, he has worked on over 70 historic buildings. He initiated and supported art projects, concerts and exhibitions.

Through his support of the Transylvania-Saxon Foundation,

he raised public awareness of this unique Transylvanian heritage, encouraged the use of traditional skills, and promoted good conservation methods. He has particularly encouraged the long-term care of historic buildings through his collaboration with the Romanian government and its schools programmes, and through his connection with the Boy Scout movement.

In 2011, he received the European Heritage Award for Dedicated Service.

PARASCHIVA KOVACS

Kovacs is literally a gatekeeper of local history and heritage preservation. She is an extraordinary example of those modest, dedicated people all over Europe who, without many

resources, succeed in raising awareness on the importance of preserving the past for the benefit of the future. The former schoolteacher has dedicated almost 50 years of her life to the inventory and preservation of the cultural heritage of the Szekler community (a Hungarian group living in Romania), especially their wooden gates. These large-sized, beautifully sculpted entrances are masterpieces of folk art. Thanks to her investment, pedagogic talent, professional skills, convincing power and contagious enthusiasm, she has researched and documented the patterns, ornaments, and wood-carver dynasties in more than a hundred localities.

In 2012, Parashiva Kovacs received the European Heritage Award for Dedicated Service.



Parashiva Kovacs, Satu Mare, Harghita county, Romania



Anastasios G. Leventis
(1902-1978)

A. G. LEVENTIS FOUNDATION

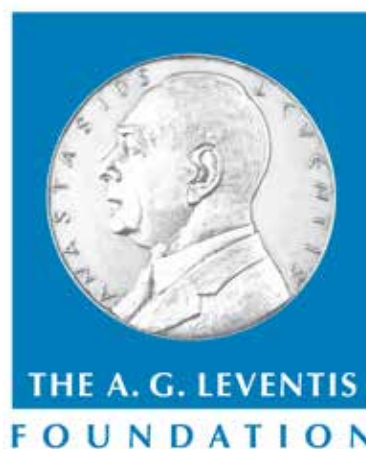
Established in May 1979, the A.G. Leventis Foundation is a product of the vision of the Cypriot entrepreneur Anastasios G. Leventis (1902-1978). The foundation supports charitable activities in education, healthcare, and ecology, but is particularly focused on safeguarding cultural heritage. It funds projects both in Europe (Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine) and in Africa (Nigeria and Ghana).

In 1936, Anastasios G. Leventis formed his own trading company which expanded rapidly in the Gold Coast and Nigeria. By the time of his death, this company and its affiliates had become one of the largest enterprises in Nigeria. In life, Leventis already supported many projects in his homeland Cyprus, intensifying his efforts given the political turmoil. In 1966, he was appointed Cyprus' Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, partly in recognition of his support for education and cultural heritage. He built up a notable private collection of European art and acquired an important

collection of works by 19th- and 20th-century Greek and Cypriot artists.

The 1974 invasion of Cyprus imposed a particular burden on him, with the personal loss of a cultural centre and a family church he had built in Petra, but also coping with the widespread destruction of Cyprus' cultural heritage. He helped repatriate looted and smuggled treasures and focused particularly on helping those injured in the event and any refugees.

Now, more than 40 years after the death of its founder, the Foundation retains its adherence to these priorities, keenly supporting the dissemination of Greek and Cypriot cultural heritage, as well as extensive public benefits programmes, pioneering environmental protection projects, and medical research. Its activities range from the reconstruction of a large number of classical, Byzantine, and post-Byzantine monuments and the enrichment and presentation of



Cypriot antiquities collections in museums around the world, to scholarships, and sponsorship of nature conservation and sustainable development projects in South East Europe, Africa and worldwide.

An excellent example of this work is the 'Greek Paths of Culture' project with 658 km of restored hiking and bicycle routes in no less than 11 regions across Greece; many of these routes date to ancient and medieval times. The project, which won a European Heritage Award in 2019, was initiated by Elliniki Etairia – The Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage based in Athens, Greece, and was supported by the A.G. Leventis Foundation and others, such as the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and Elliniki Etairia's Board member Phokion Potamianos & family.

Another aspect of the dynamic presence of the Foundation in cultural affairs is its art collections: the Paris Collection of European Art, the Collection of Works by Greek Artists of the 19th and 20th Centuries and the Collection of Works by Cypriot Artists. These three collections are united and housed in the

The A.G. Leventis
Gallery in Nicosia
(photo by Molly)

A.G. Leventis Gallery in Nicosia, which opened its doors in 2014.

Loukia Loizou Hadjigavriel, Director of the A. G. Leventis Gallery states: *“Anastasios G. Leventis wanted the art he collected and loved during his lifetime to be enjoyed by his compatriots and envisioned a fine arts museum that would make a lasting contribution to his homeland. Turning this dream into a reality required the team effort of a large number of people, including architects, project managers, graphic designers, museologists, art historians and technicians. All were given the full support of the Leventis family, the Board of Directors of the A. G. Leventis Foundation and, especially, the Chairman himself, Anastasios P. Leventis. Our Gallery aspires to play an important role in the development of Cypriot society. Above all, the space and the artworks it houses extend far beyond the boundaries of our country to convey the spirit and ideals of Europe.”*

In 2006, the A.G. Leventis Foundation received a European Heritage Award for Dedicated Service. The organisation actively and generously supports Europa Nostra in many projects and actions.

The Renzo Piano-designed Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC) in Athens



THE STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

Stavros Spyros Niarchos (1909-1996) was one of the most innovative and successful businessmen of the 20th century. The Greek shipping legend was a globalist before the word was even invented. Niarchos' legacy continues in the Stavros Niarchos Foundation which celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2021. Since 1996, the Foundation has donated more than \$3.1 billion through over 4,900 grants to non-profit organisations in more than 130 countries around the world.

The Foundation supports organisations and projects with a lasting impact in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and sports, and social welfare. It also facilitates public-private partnerships. Over the years, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation

has supported many projects and programmes in the field of cultural heritage in Greece and other countries of South East Europe.

For instance, several initiatives of Elliniki Etairia – Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage, the country representative of Europa Nostra in Greece, have been made possible with the Foundations' assistance, including the 'Paths of Culture', a European Heritage Award winner in 2019.

The Foundation supports local communities and helps to revive the local culture and restore traditional landscapes; it was instrumental in the restoration of a traditional watermill in Prespa Lake, Greece, an extraordinary project that was 28 years in the making. Thanasis Minos, a 90-year-old craftsman, miller and lumberman, guided the construction, placement and operation of the mill's mechanical parts. In 2016, the restoration won a European Heritage Award Grand Prix. Another award winner, in 2012, the restoration of the stunningly beautiful windmills on the island of Patmos, was also partially funded by the Foundation.



The Foundation is also active in the region by actively supporting the Balkan Museum Network (BMN) and the Foundation Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) Bosnia & Herzegovina, which bring together museum and heritage professionals and volunteers from South East Europe. Their charity-supported project 'Crafting Access – capacity building for heritage and craft-based inclusion across the western Balkans' focuses on enabling new skills, knowledge, and experiences around inclusion and accessibility of culture for everyone.

During COVID-19, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation stepped up to meet the many challenges the pandemic posed by financing projects and helping many organisations through the hardest moments of 2020 and 2021. In July 2020, they granted more than four million Euros to expand and comprehensively upgrade the Archaeological Museum of Sparta and another € 280,000 to showcase the mosaics at Sparta's *House of Europa*. Upgrading the Archaeological Museum of Sparta is one of the pillars of the Foundation's long-lasting *Laconia Initiative*. The small village of Vamvakou in Laconia was the place of origin of the Stavros Niarchos' family and the

organisation has been a close ally to the local communities for stimulating the region's development.

Another location that was close to the heart of the founder is, of course, Athens. The spectacular Renzo Piano-designed Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC) was the Foundation's largest grant to date. A much smaller project but vital for the liveability of the capital follows from the reappraisal of the city's non-classical architecture. No systematic attempt had been made to record and document these buildings for preservation purposes until the Foundation stepped in to make it possible. For seven years, archaeologists, architects, civil engineers, librarians and others staff from the non-profit organisation MONUMENTA explored every corner of Athens. They collected information and materials and made photographs and records for close to 11,000 buildings. More than 300 people volunteered their time to the project, assisted by people from the local community.

THE BALKAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

The Balkan Heritage Foundation is a Bulgarian public, non-profit, non-governmental organisation. Established in 2008, the

foundation supports the protection, conservation, management and promotion of cultural, and historical (both tangible and intangible) heritage of Europe as a precondition for sustainable development of the region.

The Foundation has conducted and supported numerous projects related to archaeological research and excavations, conservation and recording of cultural monuments and artefacts, training and education in the field of cultural heritage, volunteer workcamps, exhibitions, conferences, public lectures, fundraising campaigns, and design of strategic plans for utilisation of cultural heritage by municipalities.

One of the successful programmes of the Foundation is the Balkan Heritage Field School (BHFS), which is taught in English in four Balkan countries: Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and North Macedonia. Since 2008, BHFS has implemented 116 field school projects attended by almost 2,000 students from over 60 countries.

In 2018, The European Heritage Award Jury gave a Special Mention to the Balkan Heritage Field School for its extensive contribution to education in archaeology and conservation through multinational collaboration.



Participants of the Balkan Heritage Field School



THE BEST IN HERITAGE

Projects of Influence

Dubrovnik, Croatia

*annual, global conference featuring
award-winning museum, heritage
and conservation projects*

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(with the support of Creative Europe)
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The Best in Heritage Happy 20th Birthday

Every September, for already twenty years, heritage professionals travel to the ancient city of Dubrovnik, Croatia for The Best In Heritage. This international conference is the place to go to learn about the latest trends, to showcase professional excellence, and to meet up with colleagues from around the world. In 2020, due to the pandemic, the connections were made mostly digitally but the outcome was not different: The Best in Heritage is one of the most effective

and inspiring conventions to discuss new ideas and successful projects in the heritage field.

It all started as an idea in the head of Professor Tomislav Šola, an art historian, museologist and cultural manager with a long and impactful career in the heritage and museum world. The concept was simple but strong: select and present the most successful, award-winning projects in museums, heritage and conservation from around the world, and use this power of

example to spread quality and excellence in the whole field. And what better location than Dubrovnik, the famous heritage city and UNESCO World Heritage site on the Dalmatian coast? The Best in Heritage was born: a non-governmental, non-profit organisation based in Zagreb with an annual, global conference in Dubrovnik*. Tomislav Šola is the Director & Chairman of the Board of Stakeholders and still very much involved in 'his' The Best in Heritage.

Tomislav Šola during his The Best in Heritage presentation at Exponatec in Cologne



and awarded in the previous year are selected to come to Dubrovnik.

Luka Cipek, The Best in Heritage Project manager, explains that this selection process is not easy. *“Every year there are about 300 to 400 award winners in our field. Some of these are annual awards, some are bi-annual schemes. It is a sort of detective work as there are many small but interesting and valuable award schemes. The big ones you can read about in a press release or on social media, but there are many worthwhile projects which are more difficult to find. In that sense there is a big difference between developed, developing and underdeveloped countries. For instance, it is more challenging to find award winners from South America and Africa. When it comes to Asia, we have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chinese Museums Association, and with the Japanese Museum Association, so we have proper access to those projects. We collect all this data from around the world and our Board of Advisors and Stakeholders then approve a shortlist of some 50 laureates. We invite 42 to the conference, and share all the vital information on our website.”*

Theatre Marin Držić in the heart of Dubrovnik, the main venue of The Best in Heritage (photo by Filip Beusan)



Welcome reception in the Sponza Palace, also called Divona, is a 16th-century palace in Dubrovnik (photo by Filip Beusan)



Since then, during the annual conference, representatives of over forty laureates present and discuss their achievements with their peers and a highly interested audience. It is

an informal get-together of excellence. The Best in Heritage capitalises on the work of many professional juries around the world as only projects which have been officially recognised

A substantial amount of the winners who share their success stories during the conference are the laureates of the European Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. Europa Nostra has been a partner of The Best in Heritage since 2008, with support of Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

Besides the core programme, which takes place in the charming ambience of the neo-baroque Theatre Marin Držić in the heart of Dubrovnik, The Best in Heritage also features *IMAGINES*, a part of the conference which is solely dedicated to new technologies and multimedia projects. The Heritage in Motion Awards in which Europa Nostra is a partner, together with the European Museum Academy and Europeana, has presented excellent examples over the years in this segment of the conference.

At the end of the gathering, the professionals and the moderators choose two ‘The Projects of Influence,’ the most excellent projects. These laureates are invited as the keynote speakers at the next edition of the event. They are also invited to take part in Exponatec Cologne, the bi-annual international trade fair for museums & heritage, to present their projects to an even larger audience at The Best in Heritage stand and programme. Each year there are two ‘influential’ winners - one from the *IMAGINES* event, and one from the core programme.

Luka Cipek: “Over the years it has been getting more easy to attract people to attend our conference. Our visitors’ numbers are slightly up every year. The last edition of 2020 was, of course, very different. We had to adjust our programme to go almost completely digital, and in a way, set up a small TV-station of sorts. We produced and released 45 video-interviews with



European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award winner Association 4 GRADA DRAGODID participating in the Best in Heritage (photo by Filip Beusan)



John Sell, former Chairman of the Best in Heritage Board and former Executive Vice-President of Europa Nostra

representatives of the laureates over the summer. Much time and effort was spent on promotion on social media. Dubrovnik is a different place during the pandemic, people dependent on tourism saw their income cut off and their finances depleted. Grass and flowers are growing between the cobblestones in the old city, where a year ago over a million of tourists were walking. On top of that, Croatia was hit twice by an earthquake in 2020. Despite all these setbacks, the

conference was very successful. We are not yet sure if the 2021 edition will be only digital or that it will be some kind of hybrid form, but it is our 20th edition, so it will be special.”

*The Best in Heritage is supported by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), in partnership with Europa Nostra with support of Creative Europe programme, the City of Dubrovnik, the Croatian Ministry of Culture, the Museums of Dubrovnik, Meyvaert, Exponatec Cologne and other sponsors.



Aerial view of Bled
Island, Slovenia.
Photo by Gilad Topaz
– Competition 2019

Wiki Loves Monuments

*The worldwide photo competition celebrates
its 12th anniversary in 2022*



Right from the beginning in 2010, Wiki Loves Monuments' goal was to expand the digital records for monuments, both famous and lesser-known. The competition has grown beyond just a photography competition: volunteers also contribute their knowledge to Wikipedia through writing articles, curating the massive monuments database on

Facts about Wiki Loves Monuments

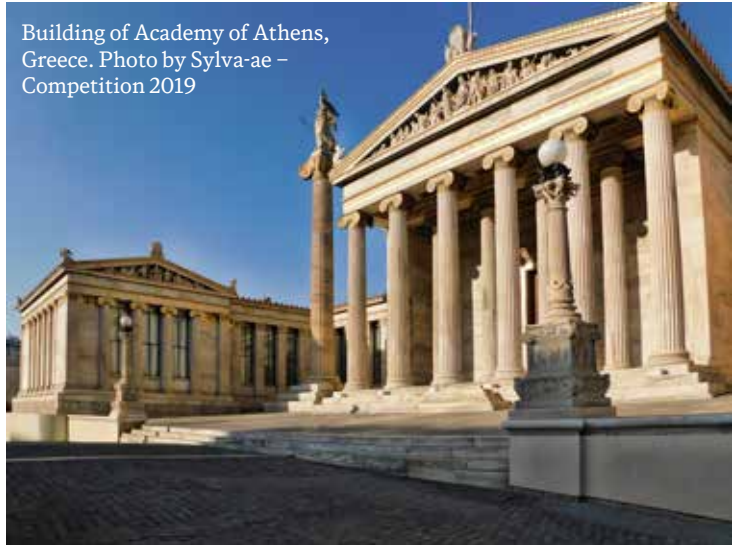
- When** : Month of September
- Where** : Countries change from year to year
- Images** : More than 2 million free photos were collected
Wikipedia uses 450,000
- Winners** : Every country selects ten winners
The grand finale in the international competition has fifteen winners
- Participate** : wikilovesmonuments.org

Fertilizer and Chemical Products Plant Complex, Greece. Photo by Roy Batty – Competition 2018

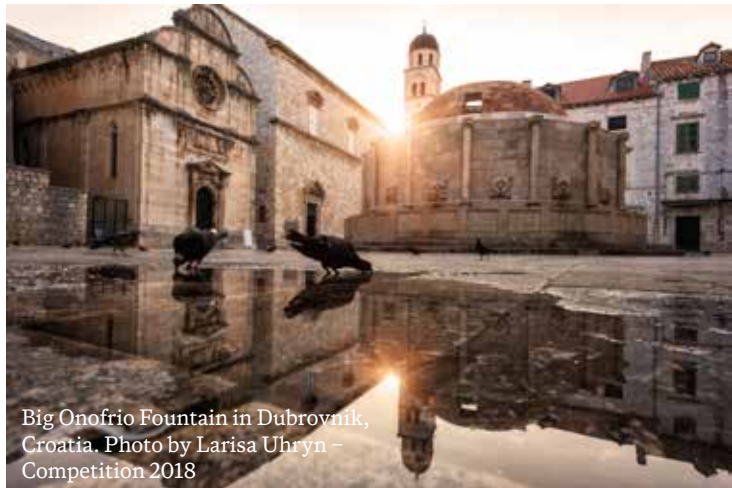
Restored church in Novo Brdo, Kosovo. Photo by Arben Llapashtica – Competition 2019



Building of Academy of Athens, Greece. Photo by Sylva-ae – Competition 2019



Kiri Bridge Kiri River, Albania. Photo by Shkelzen Rexha – Competition 2016



Big Onofrio Fountain in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Photo by Larisa Uhryn – Competition 2018



8 Sunset over Park-museum Shipka-Buzludzha, Bulgaria. Photo by Ann Boeva – Competition 2017



Bač Fortress, Serbia. Grand Prix winner of the European Heritage/Europa Nostra Award 2018.
Photo by JsFotomorgana – Competition 2016

Wikidata, and by encouraging people to participate through local events. Over the last ten years, Wiki Loves Monuments has provided a platform for people to share their personal stories of their favourite monuments and raise awareness of monuments worldwide, some of them endangered.

Like Wikipedia, Wiki Loves Monuments is built on a philosophy of open participation and free-licensed sharing. Through the work of thousands of volunteers, all of us can enjoy, discover, document, and share the built cultural heritage. Go to the Wiki Commons page and search for your choice heritage sites, enjoy the photographs, and use them non-commercially by acknowledging the photographers under a creative commons license.

Each year more countries and more volunteers participate. Everybody can contribute images as well as write articles. There are just a few rules: the

Iarna la Cazinou,
Constanța, Bulgaria.
One of the 7 Most
Endangered sites,
which is currently
being restored
Photo by Dan Carp
– Competition 2018



photos should be self-taken and self-uploaded; they should be freely licensed and contain an identified monument.

An image is worth a thousand words in every language, and local enthusiasts can (re)discover the cultural, historical, or scientific significance of their neighbourhood. In more than 40 countries worldwide, a national contest is organised with their national monuments, partners, rules, events, and winners. A selection of those winners will then participate in the international Wiki Loves Monuments competition. Unfortunately, due to movement and travel constrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were fewer opportunities to photograph as usual.

Europa Nostra has been for years a proud partner in the Wiki Loves Monuments project. Many winners of the European Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards and the 7 Most Endangered sites were photographed for the competition. For this South East Europe special, we selected some of the favourite national winners and runner-ups of the last few years.

Gjirokastrë
Castle, Albania.
Photo by
Gashi Bujar –
Competition 2019

The Thracian Tomb of Sveshtari,
Bulgaria. Photo by Interact Bulgaria
– Competition 2016

The Thracian
Tomb of Sveshtari,
Bulgaria. Photo by
Interact Bulgaria
– Competition
2016





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EUROPEAN HERITAGE AWARDS 2022



The European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards is Europe's most prestigious accolade in the heritage field. Every year, it honours the most outstanding heritage achievements from all over the continent. It recognises the excellence and dedication by architects, craftspeople, heritage experts, volunteers, schools, local communities and the media.

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In 2022, the awards will be given to up to 30 remarkable heritage projects and initiatives. Up to four will be selected as Grand Prix winners, receiving €10,000 each, and one will be given the Public Choice Award.

More info: europanostra.org / europeanheritageawards.eu

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