

**CULTURAL HERITAGE  
IN ACTION** Sharing solutions  
in European  
cities and regions



#EuropeForCulture

# EUROPEAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

**CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS  
AND VISIONS FROM CITIES  
AND REGIONS**

**THEMATIC ANALYSIS**



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# INTRODUCTION

Since 2020, Cultural Heritage in Action, financed by the Creative Europe programme, empowers cities and regions to strengthen their cultural heritage policies and initiatives as well as develop innovative solutions to preserve cultural heritage assets and make the most of their potential to drive local and regional development.

Across the European Union, cultural heritage is an important asset for culture, economy, tourism, and territorial competitiveness. It shapes identities of cities and regions, positively affects well-being and quality of life, and contributes to social cohesion. Investing in cultural heritage is strategic for cities and regions. Some have been more successful than others in making bold investments about cultural heritage, and in ensuring long term benefits; there is a lot to learn from these initiatives, and Cultural Heritage in Action aims to facilitate exchanges among the European Union's cities, regions, key stakeholders, and Member States to visit and learn from good practice examples, exchange views and ultimately strengthen their cultural heritage offers.

Cultural Heritage in Action delivered on these objectives by:

- 1) Capturing and documenting 60 good practices on cultural heritage across cities and regions in the European Union
- 2) Co-designing a series of 15 peer-learning visits (10 online, 5 on-site)
- 3) Developing a series of 4 thematic webinars
- 4) Enrolling 312 participants in peer-learning visits (223 participants in online peer-learning visits and 89 in onsite visits)

Cultural Heritage in Action is part of the [European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage](#) of the European Commission, following on the momentum spearheaded by the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage. The Framework recognises the crucial role played by the cities and regions in the implementation of development policies driven by cultural heritage and sets specific clusters of future actions and initiatives, including Cultural Heritage in Action.



## WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT TOGETHER

Cultural Heritage in Action is about learning together and empowering cities and regions across Europe to develop innovative cultural heritage policies and projects. All activities of Cultural Heritage in Action were therefore designed to facilitate knowledge-sharing in a practical and actionable way to solve actual challenges faced by cities and regions through cultural heritage policies and projects. Peer-learning and transferability are essential features of the project.

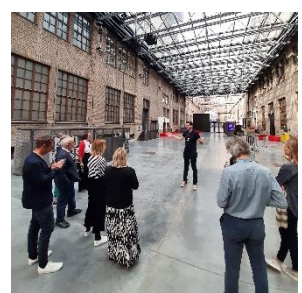
### IN FOCUS: PEER-LEARNING AND TRANSFERABILITY OF LOCAL PRACTICES

A core dimension of Cultural Heritage in Action is the deep level of engagement of all participants throughout the project. The model of peer-learning visit is particularly relevant in that respect, as participants are working in similar positions and facing comparable challenges and are carefully handpicked to make sure they make the most of the peer-learning methodology. Another crucial element is that all participants have sufficient common ground to share ideas, practices, and methods.

Future projects looking to develop similar approaches can certainly benefit from the formats (both online and onsite) and tools developed throughout Cultural in Action. In addition, Eurocities has taken stock of its experience in delivering peer-learning projects (including in fields other than cultural heritage) and compiled a handbook to help other organisations deliver similar initiatives.

Based on these experiences, we can put forward the following tips for future peer-learning visits:

- Set out clear objectives for the peer-learning visits and for each agenda item, with sufficient time for exchanges with participants – they all have a lot to bring to the table.
- Prepare in advance – managing peer-learning activities does take time to coordinate (to align the agenda with the objectives of the session, prepare for several coordination meetings / back and forth exchanges with the hosts).
- Know who you will involve – invest resources in match-making participants with host organisations, including a clear selection process, clear questions to assess interest and expertise of participants); the [call for application documents](#) from Cultural Heritage in Action can be used as templates for future peer-learning schemes.
- Ensure that expert facilitation is in place (e.g. through facilitation plans and clear role allocation).
- Do not pack agendas, and ensure you keep enough time for breaks and informal discussion.
- Alternate information-sharing, onsite visits, and interactive sessions.
- Do not hesitate to use bold formats and new tools to keep participants engaged.



Peer-learning visits in Leeds, Zaragoza, and Helsinki.

In this analysis we briefly outline the main features of this approach, and then analyse how the knowledge captured throughout Cultural Heritage in Action helps to address the main challenges faced by European cities and regions.

Six core topics formed the bedrock of all the project activities:

- Recovery and resilience through cultural heritage in a post pandemic world
- Cultural heritage for local sustainable development
- Governance and financing: new roles for local and regional authorities
- Participatory governance of cultural heritage
- Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings
- Quality of interventions on cultural heritage

This analysis is structured across these themes, outlining the main challenges and solutions identified for each of them.



Peer-learning visit in Krakow.

## 2.1 RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE IN A POST PANDEMIC WORLD

Cultural heritage plays an important role in shaping how cities and regions reinvent themselves in a post pandemic world. Cultural heritage is a key component in the recovery process thanks to its potential to engage in a dialogue around contemporary events and co-produce new knowledge and narratives with more diverse communities and perspectives in mind. The capacity of cultural heritage to increase citizens engagement would also benefit cultural institutions in a post-Covid world where the trend is to retain local audiences and shape new sense of places. The sanitary crisis is an opportunity to strengthen management strategies based on prevention and disaster response, and the responses to COVID-19 has proved our creativity to deliver new cultural offers and services.

The main challenges and solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action include:

Challenges	Solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action
A key challenge is to demonstrate the economic potential of cultural heritage and its relevance in a post-pandemic economy, where public budgets are particularly strained.	The Fortress of Culture in <b>Šibenik</b> offers an excellent example of heritage as a driver for economic development. Through different sites across the city, it attracts more than 200,000 visitors per year and has quickly become the main 'selling point' of the city for its territorial marketing and branding. With more than 2000 media releases per year, its branding and marketing value is estimated at over €5 million. It generates more than €1 million per year in ticket revenues and is financially self-sufficient in its daily operations. More information is available <a href="#">here</a> .
In a post-pandemic context, cities and regions need to reflect on urban tourism and develop practices to address changing consumer needs and develop local policies and projects for more resilient, digital, and greener solutions. The aim is to strike a balance between economic, social, cultural, and environmental needs, including the protection of cultural heritage, to ensure the mid and long-term sustainability of tourism and cultural heritage.	<p>Addressing issues linked to over-tourism, <a href="#">FeelFlorence</a> is an app suggesting unusual itineraries in the city centre, in neighbourhoods and in the metropolitan area, bringing visitors closer to local experiences and avoiding over-tourism in central areas of the city. Thanks to a real-time detection of the presences in certain areas, the app warns tourists to avoid overcrowded destinations and better organise their stay. It was also used to manage flows to maintain social distancing. The app is also an integrated tool gathering information where tourism offices promote new paths and experiences outside traditional touristic areas.</p> <p><b>Lisbon</b> has become a popular tourist destination, but at the same time its historical districts were left by the local population over years. This threatened the distinctive character of the city and put traditional shops and commerce at risk of bankruptcy.</p> <p>The programme <a href="#">Lojas com História</a> (Shops with a history) was launched with the aim of safeguarding the remaining retail stores with unique commercial activities and whose history is intertwined with the city. Awarding traditional shops and their owners allows at the same time to fight property speculation and prevent the unrestrained increase of the retail rents. Indeed, each distinguished shop immediately benefits from a mandatory commercial lease renewal for up to 10 years, on top of greater public visibility and support for the building's rehabilitation or improvement of business activities. Distinctions are communicated to the national Ministry of Economy to exempt the shop owner from property tax. The exemption lasts if the store retains the distinction.</p> <p>The Portuguese cities of Angra do Heroísmo (Açores), Braga, Cascais, Coimbra, Funchal (Madeira), Fundão, Loulé, Porto, Sintra and V.N. Famalicão have already replicated this practice.</p>



Many cities and regions stressed the accrued risk of social exclusion in the aftermath of the pandemic. There is a particular need to engage in a meaningful way citizens not reached by traditional educational and social activities.

[Ghent](#) is a breeding ground for creatives, giving them space and support. The city works with local organisations to revitalise the social housing quarter 'Malem'. A former parish church listed as non-protected heritage now hosts infrastructure for circus artists, with a community arts practice that offers qualitative training to artists, and specific activities for children and youngsters.

The project Museum in the Village in the [Leiria](#) county was developed with the purpose of reducing loneliness and social isolation among elderly people (over 65) living in rural secluded areas, with lower population density and with reduced access to a diverse cultural infrastructure. was built with the purpose of reducing loneliness and social isolation among elderly communities, aged over 65, living in rural secluded areas, with lower population density and with reduced access to a diverse cultural infrastructure.

By taking art pieces from 13 selected museums' collections to the senior population, through exhibitions and artistic performances in unexpected places (fish market, inactive schools), the project approaches people's emotional, social, and artistic spheres. It promotes creativity among senior citizens, using music and artistic collective practices. The project was co-created by politicians, museum professionals, artists, and inhabitants from rural areas.

Sustain digital engagement and new solutions developed through the COVID 19 pandemic: cultural heritage institutions have developed a broad range of new tools and ways of engaging with users throughout the waves of the pandemic and striking a balance between relaunching 'normal' activities and sustaining new experiences has proven challenging.

[Bakar Tourism Board](#) decided to work with children to create a book that would be an open, self-guided tour following Ivan Čop. Born in 1869, he was a blind water carrier who kept going despite all odds. The Tourism Board produced an illustrated book and audiobook titled 'Pebbles of tears' together with accompanying souvenirs, a gamified tour, and even a sculpture of Ivan Čop crafted by the blind sculptor Emil Mandarić.

With the book, visitors could continue exploring and learning about local heritage despite the Covid-19 restrictions. Bakar saw an opportunity to show that tourism could be meaningful, respectful, and educational. The project also advances the idea that new experiences developed throughout the pandemic could also be used in a normal context.



The blind water carrier in Bakar



## 2.2 CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR LOCAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The effects of climate change are already degrading and irreversibly changing our natural and cultural heritage. It puts thousands of sites with cultural, historic, and archaeological values at risk of being damaged or lost altogether, including archaeological sites that have not yet been discovered. Structural changes are necessary in the management of our cultural environment.

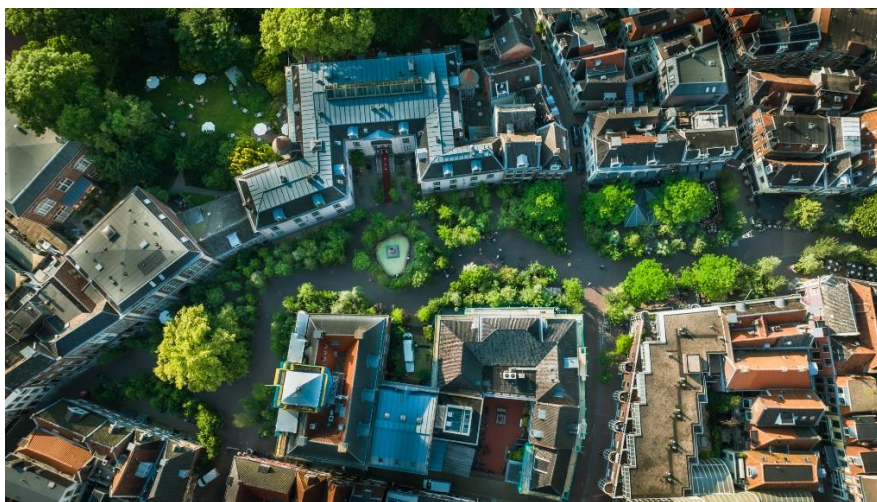
In that sense, the climate crisis also offers a moment of radical new thinking and innovation and an opportunity to explore and test innovative ways to protect and adapt monuments, historical buildings, and sites from the effects of climate change and natural hazards. Cultural heritage can be a driver for a new green and sustainable economy. This can be done by bringing environmental sustainability and action on climate change into cultural heritage activities, enhancing economic, social, and cultural value in cities and regions, and contributing to all key areas of the European Green Deal.

Cultural heritage is also a unique resource to change behaviours and promote more sustainable practices throughout society. Several cities and regions are launching large-scale activities to raise awareness and encourage actions towards a greener future.

The main challenges and solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action include:

Challenges	Solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action
Cities are strongly committed to becoming more sustainable, including in the field of cultural heritage (e.g. target goals for 2024 in the Agenda 21 for culture). A core challenge for cultural heritage organisations is to make environmentally responsible choices throughout the entire production chain.	<p>In the city of <a href="#">Lille</a>, museums commit to staging sustainable exhibitions, including temporary ones.</p> <p>For its recent Goya exhibition, the Museum of Fine Arts decided to showcase its own collection and limit the number of loans, to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions induced by the transportation of artworks. The scenography followed the 6 R's principle (Rethink, Reduce, Replace, Reuse, Recycle, Repair). It was built using environmentally friendly materials and followed a modular design. A large part of the scenography used for the exhibition was reused for two exhibitions in autumn 2022. Planning over a longer timespan can help to reduce the overall carbon footprint of cultural programming over years without comprising on artistic quality.</p> <p>Digital technology also gave a more inclusive and accessible dimension to the exhibition, with specific attention to energy efficiency and sensible use. The city also calculated the carbon footprint of the exhibition, to assess the effectiveness of the efforts, and offers tools to capitalise from one experiment to another.</p> <p>Similarly, the <b>Reims</b> city museums initiated a global environmental approach based on a cultural season entitled "<a href="#">Museums go green</a>" in 2022. This followed up on an ambitious sustainable transformation plan of the city museums. This plan rolls out over 2016-2025; it includes structural work on the museums' infrastructures and collections but also awareness-raising activities such as artistic commissions and temporary exhibitions. This includes a broad range of initiatives, including using contemporary art to question and enrich the way we look at sites and collections; enhancing the value of the museums' green spaces as part of an increased off-site policy; mobilising the museums' collections to better understand the links between humans and their environment; paying attention to environmental issues in museum productions across the value chain; informing visitors of the efforts made by museums to be greener in the</p>

	exhibitions and online; and integrating environmental awareness into the daily activities of the museums.
Addressing environmental challenges requires working on the entire value chain of cultural heritage and developing new partnerships	<p>The city of <b>Stockholm</b> introduced the <a href="#">Material storehouse</a>, where cultural organisations can rent everything from clothes from the opera and expensive men's bed socks to headlights and screws. Scenery, decor, electronics, stands and other reusable materials from different museums and theatres are collected here after the show. Props can then be borrowed from the storehouse, extending their life and cycle of uses. The institutions funding the project can return and borrow materials for free. Other interested parties, such as art schools, theatre groups or artists with their businesses, can become customers of the warehouse and rent or buy materials.</p> <p>Interestingly, this led to more cooperation between the 5 institutions partnering in Material storehouse. Several other cities across Sweden are also taking the first steps in creating their own Material storehouse. This national network serves as a forum (and actor) to discuss broader environmental issues in the cultural sector.</p> <p>In <b>Dresden</b>, the <a href="#">Culture Development Plan</a> identified climate protection and sustainability as crosscutting issues that should be addressed by the cultural sector with cross-sectoral action planning. The main challenge for the city was to introduce sustainability practices in the cultural and creative industries, and to involve and support them in developing their sustainability strategies.</p>
Raise awareness on climate issues and encourage greener behaviours is more needed than ever but identifying the right types of interventions (through cultural heritage) can prove challenging.	<p>The city of <b>Leeuwarden</b> commissioned a large city-scale intervention to raise awareness on sustainability. Bosk was a <a href="#">mobile art project</a> with an intense programme of performances and exhibitions that focused the public's attention on the urgent need to change our relationship with nature. Every day for a hundred days, a different part of Leeuwarden city centre turned green, with over 1,000 trees walking around the city.</p> <p>Beyond the mobile artistic installation, the project included a summer school for Leeuwarden neighbourhoods, a Bosk news programme for primary school pupils, a whispering garden, and art performances. Bosk created a space for everyone to make time for conversations, art, and ideas. After a hundred days, the walking forest left Leeuwarden city centre, and the trees made their way to their final destinations. Dispersed throughout the city and the surrounding areas, they found fresh soil where they put down roots and now keep an eye on future generations.</p>



Bosk in Leeuwarden

## 2.3 GOVERNANCE AND FINANCING: NEW ROLES FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Local and regional authorities are increasingly aware of the importance to place citizens as actors rather than users of their territory. Over the years, citizens have been encouraged to take on a wider range of responsibilities to ensure that local services continue to be delivered and improved effectively in the future. Culture and cultural heritage have often been at the forefront of citizens participation and engagement, as artistic intervention is a good trigger to have citizens interested and willing to shape their environment in a co-designed manner. Investing in culture and local cultural heritage can create opportunities to engage and empower citizens through strong participatory approaches. Besides, culture and cultural heritage have often been used as tools to test and renew local governance models into models that are more flexible, dialogue-based, and co-designed, be it with local stakeholders, associations and organisations, and even inside local and regional administrations themselves.

The main challenges and solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action include:

Challenges	Solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action
Public finances are often overstretched, particularly in a post-COVID context. As a result, cultural heritage organisations are often asked to develop new revenue streams and to diversify their incomes	<p>The example of the <a href="#">Cantabria</a> region shows that EU Funds devoted to heritage are more and more important. A proper holistic strategy (associating cultural heritage preservation and economic development) is key to access significant funding, and it is important to develop a local cultural agenda that includes a strategy to mobilise EU funds through various programmes (Horizon Europe, Recovery Fund, Creative Europe, Green Deal, New European Bauhaus, Structural funds etc). Cantabria will use EUR 1.2 million of the Recovery Fund to protect its heritage.</p> <p>Unlocking new revenue streams can also stem from the intangible value of cultural heritage. Intellectual property can protect cultural heritage assets while also enabling their exploitation through the trading of rights and licensing. It is worthwhile investigating the value of intellectual property in the local context and develop appropriate strategies for local heritage sites and businesses that could benefit from tourism and pilgrimage.</p>
Cities and regions face the challenge to develop new funding models with a very diverse range of actors, especially on cultural heritage.	A mosaic funding approach can be developed, where an extended ecosystem has access to a variety of funding sources. The <a href="#">Cantabria region</a> has developed cooperation with local and regional agencies such as the Liébana Local Action Group or OPE Cantabria (the regional EU office), which enables the Centre of Lebana Studies (a multidisciplinary cultural and touristic hub organisation) and its partners to access different kinds of funding programmes. Well informed partners can then mobilise start-up grants, cultural endowments, knowledge exchange support or renovation funds. These can contribute to heritage regeneration and management from ideation and community engagement, through participatory process and codesign to renovation, management, and programming. Such a mosaic of funding sources also allows local consortia to build long-term visions where different funding sources complement each other as different elements of an integrated, long-term trajectory.
Several cities and regions face depopulation, loss of distinction and	The territory of <a href="#">Sénia</a> is composed of 27 town councils which formed the Taula del Sénia Commonwealth in 2006 to preserve their unique cultural heritage: ancient olive trees. The consortium was then joined by private stakeholders (tree owners, oil producers, restaurants, and other actors) to form the non-profit Sénia



endangered heritage due to lack of resources.

Territory Association. An oil brand was created to control production of certified oil from ancient olive trees.

A holistic, cross-sectorial project now preserves the ancient olive trees and deals with oil production, tourism, cultural and educational activities and more, making the trees a symbol of the territory and driving sustainable development.

This led to better protection and greater awareness of cultural heritage, as well as increased tourism, and a steady increase of yearly visits to the natural museums of ancient olive trees. The culture of the oil, local products and new economic activities has created jobs and slowed down depopulation.



Ancient olive trees in Sènia



## 2.4 PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Participatory governance is about people-centred approaches that involve the public sector, private stakeholders, and civil society to:

- co-design cultural heritage policies and programmes
- share management and safeguarding of cultural heritage
- increase awareness and valorisation of cultural heritage in communities
- use cultural heritage as a resource for community and territorial development

The main challenges and solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action include:

Challenges	Solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action
Cultural Heritage is not always accessible to citizens, and the management and preservation of heritage is often top-down; citizens' ownership of cultural heritage is sometimes weak.	<p>The Adopt a Monument programme in <a href="#">Tampere</a> is about the maintenance and preservation of archaeological sites and historical buildings by groups of volunteers ('adopters').</p> <p>Adopters can be a community, an association, a company, or a public entity such as a school. No earlier experience is required, nor special skills or knowledge. Adopters oversee the management of the appointed heritage site: they monitor its condition, study its history, and organise events. They are supported by professionals in the Pirkanmaa Regional Museum (archaeologists, researchers and a master builder specialised in restoration) who provide advice on management of sites and develop participatory methods.</p>
Engaging with different audiences can be challenging, especially when it comes to attracting young people to heritage activities and/or involving them in cultural heritage activities and management.	<p>The Door Breakers project is one of the main initiatives in <a href="#">Zaragoza</a> to engage young audiences in cultural heritage. The project started in 2021 to promote youth engagement and participation in cultural heritage.</p> <p>A framework was developed and a call to the youth was released to bring them into the five municipal museums and to give them an active role. The group of sites susceptible to "break" is usually designated by the moniker ZMuseos (Zaragoza Museos) and encompasses the Pablo Gargallo Museum — dedicated to a leading artist of the Spanish avant-garde movement —, the Roman Forum Museum, the Roman Theatre, the Roman Port Museum, and the Roman Thermal Baths.</p> <p>Youngsters are involved in all the steps needed to programme the annual agenda of all the five museums. Aged 16 to 21 years old, they are assigned with defined roles as a group, objectively helping in fostering cultural action and attraction for teenagers — creating permanent links with them based on their interests —, and ultimately being the leaders of all the strategies related to their age group. Every two years a new group of twenty-five teenagers is selected. The city's Culture and Youth team supervises the project and, among other functions, monitors all the administrative processes required; teenagers are directly involved in the management itself, are given a certain degree of responsibility and understand the possibilities and constraints of heritage management.</p>
Lack of cooperation between different cultural heritage institutions remains a core challenge in many cities and regions.	<p>Setting up thematic approaches with a clear focus can help strengthen cooperation and partnerships. The <a href="#">Dresden</a> Office for Culture and Monument Protection and the Dresden Environmental Centre - an NGO coordinating and promoting different projects to protect the environment - initiated Culture for Future. Dresden's cultural institutions started developing strategies and implementing measures aiming to make the sector more sustainable. The aim was to inspire and guide other institutions' sustainability strategies. During the pilot project five cultural institutions from different sectors were involved, ranging</p>

from orchestras to museums, libraries, theatres, and music festivals. The idea was to include institutions from different art genres, diverse management structures and experience levels. During a series of workshops, employees of the participating cultural institutions developed the Dresden Charter for Sustainability, which many more organisations have signed since then. In parallel, two events 'Culture Connect' and 'Peer Catch-up' were used as platforms for discussion among participants in the project. The co-design approach centred around a common goal, which gave a clear focus to onboard all partner institutions.

The city of Waterford used a site-specific approach to strengthen cooperation. O'Connell Street was once the city's retail centre and remains a central thoroughfare in the city. It boasts many heritage buildings with specific historical significance to the city. In recent years, it has lost much of its prosperity and energy and is struggling to find a purpose in the modern city.

In 2018, Waterford Cultural Quarter (initiated and managed by Waterford City and County Council) and the Department of Architecture at SETU (South-East Technological University) began a continuous collaboration on co-research and co-design projects for the historic area of the city. This close cooperation led to providing a city-owned space for architectural students to create a "[warehouse of ideas](#)". The initiative brings creative young people and the city's decision-makers into a reciprocal relationship that helps envision a creative, sustainable regeneration of the city and an action plan for its cultural heritage. This includes co-design activities for cultural events and the mapping and recording of streets for future projects.



Culture for future: Dresden Charter for Sustainability

## 2.5 ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS

Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings means giving a new use to an obsolete, underused, or misused building by making the most of its potentialities. In the adaptive reuse approach, rather than continuing the building's existing use through upgrades or restoring it to a specific time period, the new use is defined and adapted to the building while preserving and respecting its value and significance. The main challenges and solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action include:

Challenges	Solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action
The tension between preserving the heritage value of a site as well as other important aspects (e.g. ecological environment, social uses) while contributing to the quality of life of the local communities	Left abandoned for decades, the former freight station at <a href="#">Gleisdreieck</a> , in the heart of <b>Berlin</b> , had become a vast industrial wasteland, where an outstanding and unique ecological environment had developed over the years. The former railway site was transformed into the Park am Gleisdreieck, a trendy urban oasis that also provides a vital link between neighbourhoods. Dense areas of wild growth and relics from the railway era have been preserved, e.g. railroad tracks, signalling systems, buffer stops. From the beginning, citizens have been involved in the project, contributing ideas to the design and landscape planning. The park constitutes a modern and culturally enhanced urban quarter without denying its industrial past. The multiple uses of the park are enshrined in a User Advisory Board (since 2015), meant as a platform to discuss the future developments of the park, emerging conflicts, and possible solutions. It includes citizens, relevant stakeholders, and representatives from the public administration.
Cities and regions are reinventing public spaces through adaptive reuses of cultural heritage, notably for cultural and creative activities	The city of <a href="#">Helsinki</a> founded Kaapeli, a limited real-estate company, to convert the former Nokia Cable Factory into a cultural centre back in 1991. The centre evolved over time and is very much a mixed venue today, consisting of 63,000 sqm of space, used by 130 ateliers, two bars, 12 galleries, three museums, two restaurants, multiple event venues and a brand-new dance house with two halls. Through different uses (office space, exhibition areas, cafes, restaurants, dance hall, event space, etc.) the building is accessible during most times of the day (and nights). The welcome area is also an open space for the public. The centre is very much a model for new kinds of open use of buildings, like self-service library buildings, but with a clear artistic focus. More than 500,000 people attended events there in 2019, which shows the success of the 'open' dimension of the building, while private uses remain.
Cities and regions are innovating to combine public and private uses of spaces to open new common spaces	Starting from the semi-abandoned monastery of Saints Peter and Prospero (also known as Cloisters of San Pietro), the city of <a href="#">Reggio Emilia</a> successfully created an open lab offering experimentation opportunities to citizens, informal groups, local organisations and young entrepreneurs to innovate in the (public) welfare services and social entrepreneurship. The Cloisters are used as a place of culture, a physical place to manifest Reggio Emilia's cultural policy. The Cloisters and the Open Lab are open spaces hosting cultural events, educational programmes and training in creative and digital skills, and co-working spaces for prototyping of goods and services.
A very common challenge is to repurpose abandoned heritage, especially in contexts where the preservation of heritage	Since 2008, the municipality of <a href="#">Daugavpils</a> has been undertaking a regeneration programme for its fortress, which had become a degraded and unattractive space, despite its great heritage value and potential for development. The aim is to create conditions for local economic activities to flourish, especially in the tourism and cultural sectors; preserve, restore, and



assets is recent and/or under-resourced.

reuse the various parts of the fortification complex; and improve the quality of life of inhabitants.

Elements of the fortress were gradually restored for new functions and an improved image: a culture and information centre; the Mark Rothko Art Centre opened in 2013, and other services (e.g. the regional police department). Cultural, sport and educational events take place in the fortress all year round: museum night, art night, re-enactment festival, European heritage days, historical quests, art symposiums, etc.



Kaapeli, Helsinki



## 2.6 QUALITY OF INTERVENTIONS ON CULTURAL HERITAGE

Interventions on cultural heritage might be risky and can put heritage in danger if no proper attention is given to the materials and processes used, and if local communities are not involved. Quality interventions are essential if we want to bequeath our heritage to future generations – they are the outcome of multiple factors, including aesthetics, habitability, environmental friendliness, accessibility, integration into the surrounding environment and affordability. The main challenges and solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action include:

Challenges	Solutions identified throughout Cultural Heritage in Action
Climate change and lack of maintenance threaten heritage features, which are often fragile and/or require specific craftsmanship for adequate maintenance. Engaging with private owners to ensure the preservation of heritage can also be a challenge.	<p><a href="#">Traditional closed timber balconies</a> are part of <b>Malta's</b> cultural identity. They highly influence the aesthetic of the streetscape with their colours, materials, and decorative motifs. Yet they are often degraded and/or replaced with new materials (such as aluminium) or modern infrastructure considered more affordable and maintenance-free.</p> <p>Maltese local authorities designed a holistic strategy engaging with heritage professionals and citizens, leading to the restoration of more than 4,000 timber balconies. Meetings and workshops with craftsmen and artisans gave local authorities deeper understanding of the needs and barriers in preserving timber balconies. This informed integrated policy actions leading to updated guidelines for timber heritage restoration: improved education and training for heritage professionals; awareness-raising for residents and more adapted funding schemes to encourage restoration, including the improvement of 1996 grant schemes to mitigate the cost of restoring and maintaining traditional timber balconies.</p>
Futureproof cultural heritage sites and interventions require strategic approaches, combining excellence in heritage preservations while accommodating new uses	<p>In <b>s'Hertogenbosch</b> the overall redevelopment plan for the former <a href="#">St. John's bulwark</a> is an excellent example of the application of quality principles in heritage preservation. The municipality set up a Fortifications Development Team to supervise the restoration works, in close cooperation with local landscape architects. It carefully selected the team's composition to combine historical, archaeological, technical, and ecological expertise necessary to carry out the complex restoration work.</p> <p>The municipality decided to restore the former water defence feature instead of building a new system. The plan clearly accommodated new uses, including both cultural and economic activities in the mix. This included the creation of a new heritage and visitors centre with amenities and cultural activities. The municipality leases the management of the space to an association of heritage volunteers, ensuring not only economic sustainability and employment opportunities but also revenue streams that can be invested in other heritage and educational projects.</p> <p>The quality principles and the adoption and flexible / multifunctional uses are also applied in several cities. In Helsinki, the flexible modular layout of the <a href="#">cable factory</a> (Kaapeli) premises allows for flexible and different uses in the building to ensure seamless multifunctional purposes.</p>

## 2.7 CULTURAL HERITAGE IS EVERYWHERE – ADDRESSING SOCIETAL ISSUES THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE

Beyond the specific topics addressed by Cultural Heritage in Action, it appeared clearly that cultural heritage plays a much wider role in our society. Cities' cultural strategies are increasingly connected to other global issues, in particular sustainable development, social inclusion, and empowering communities. The cultural and creative sectors play a key role in sustainable recovery:

- By engaging with contemporary events and co-producing new knowledge and narratives with more diverse communities and perspectives.
- By increasing the citizens' engagement and benefiting cultural institutions such as museums, as the trend is to localise the audience.
- By strengthening the development of cultural heritage management strategies based on prevention and disaster response.
- By enhancing creativity to deliver new cultural offers and services during Covid-19 that will now become a norm.
- By exposing public heritage spaces to new uses accessible to all and available to meet outdoors (from concerts to street performances).

The findings of the Cultural Heritage in Action project further demonstrate the role of cultural heritage in addressing key EU policy priorities, as set out in the [political guidelines of the Commission 2019-2024](#) and in the new [EU work plan for Culture 2023-2026](#). Cultural Heritage in Action provides evidence on the role of heritage in addressing several key priorities of the work plan, such as culture for the people: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society, and culture for the planet: unleashing the power of culture (especially in terms of promoting the green transition).

In practice, the relationship between core policy priorities and cultural heritage is exemplified below:

### Recovery and resilience

With a value added of EUR 412,93 million (2017), the cultural and creative sector represents 5.5% of the EU economy, employing on average 6.2% of the workforce in Member States.

In 2020 the sector lost 31% of its turnover (one of the most affected economic sectors in Europe). The closing of cultural heritage places impacted on the venues and their staff and hit a huge range of businesses behind the scenes. In cities and regions, cultural heritage is the foundation for relaunching prosperity, social cohesion, and people's well-being.

Cultural Heritage in Action showed that cultural heritage can help to revitalise rural areas, for example in Urriès where the 'Time Travel. Urriès Cultural Days' have generated strong local support and helped a rural area to bounce back after years of rural depopulation.

### Competitiveness

Creating locally rooted economic activity and employment opportunities in various sectors of the economy, for instance in cultural tourism, hospitality and gastronomy sectors; in specialised crafts and in the creative economy by activating cultural and creative entrepreneurship (e.g. heritage-based games, apps, VR/AR applications to enhance audience's experience); in the construction and real estate sectors.

Examples from Cultural Heritage in Action showed that heritage can generate important economic impacts, as in Šibenik where more than €1 million per year is raised by the Fortress of Culture in tickets sold, or in Reggio Emilia where cross-collaboration between cultural heritage and other sectors such as cultural and creative industries and ICT improved thanks to the development of a creative hub in a former cloister.

### Inclusion

Improving social cohesion and inclusion by providing new frameworks for participation and community engagement, thus improving the sense of belonging; Contributing to people and communities' quality of life by creating an enabling environment to holistically support mental, physical, emotional, and social wellbeing.

Inclusive cultural heritage initiatives can be found in Zaragoza, where the door breakers project directly empower young participants as cultural managers, or in Ghent where the CircusKerk directly addresses populations from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

### Citizen participation

Improving civic engagement and therefore democratic outcomes, especially in fragile contexts, by stimulating social and political activism, fostering a better understanding of history, improving civic pride, fostering participation in local decision making.

Cultural Heritage in Action has shown that the strong participatory element of cultural heritage initiatives is an opportunity to engage and empower citizens. Examples include events, walks, competition, food gatherings in Vantaa, or, in the city of Rijeka, a programme of artistic intervention aimed at triggering citizens' participation and engagement during the European Capital of Culture year in 2020.



### Climate & sustainability

Supporting the green transition through promotion of biodiversity, re-use of existing building stock applying circular economy principles, energy efficiency and sustainable traditional know-how. Heritage-based solutions can also promote a change of mindsets and behaviours urgently needed to live more sustainably, particularly in urban contexts.

Examples from Cultural Heritage in Action include the development of a material bank for cultural production in Stockholm or the development of green museum programming models in Lille and Reims. Wider strategies to combine culture and sustainability are developed in various cities like Dresden and Vantaa. Other cities are spearheading change towards more environmental-friendly behaviours through large-scale cultural heritage interventions. Leeuwarden is an excellent example of this with its 'Bosk' mobile art project of a walking forest focused the public's attention on the urgent need to change our relationship with nature.

### Digitisation

Shared resources and mutualization becomes particularly important when it comes to digital solutions as few cultural heritage organisations have sufficient resources to develop their own activities.

Cultural Heritage in Action identified several initiatives in this field: in Leeds, the Digital Engagement Officer regularly presents to other museum services about social media engagement, such as #MuseumFromHome, an innovative initiative aimed at sharing short educational films about the Leeds collections on social media. In Rotterdam, the Dig it Up open-source digital archive enables citizens to collectively share memories, items, and stories in a participatory approach. In Florence, the #feelFlorence app promotes unusual itineraries in the city centre, in neighbourhoods and in the metropolitan area, bringing tourists closer to local experiences and avoiding over-tourism in central areas of the city, acting both as a crowd management and a cultural heritage promotion tool.



## CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ACTION -VARIOUS LEGACIES

Cultural Heritage in Action has brought a significant contribution to equipping cultural heritage professionals across cities and regions with the inspiration and practical knowledge to develop new initiatives and interventions in their own local context.

This section explores the footprint of the Cultural Heritage in Action project for participants, looking at a range of projects that inspired new initiatives across our community.

Interestingly, these projects are very diverse in terms of scope and scale, and there is a lot to learn from a broad range of cultural heritage interventions. We have identified different types of activities that encapsulate the legacy of Cultural Heritage in Action towards its community of practitioners. These are discussed in the following sub-chapters.

### 3.1 HIGHLY REPLICABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE PROJECTS: LOW THRESHOLD ACTIVITIES

Low-threshold activities cover a range of smaller projects, quite simple to implement, but that participants found particularly useful and easier to replicate. These projects typically develop quick activation models (e.g. informal workshops and gatherings) where various communities meet through cultural heritage spaces and enable conversations in informal settings. This also demystifies cultural heritage and enables users to develop their own approaches to make cultural heritage spaces their own, while providing an ideal safe space to initiate co-created projects.



Pocket park in Krakow

Several examples from Cultural Heritage in Action deserve a highlight:

- [Pocket Parks](#) are a participatory programme to turn smaller, underused public spaces in Krakow neighbourhoods into everyday green spaces for local people. The intention is to provide more public green spaces within walking distance, as cooling islands to relax and meet people of the neighbourhood and to raise the awareness about the importance of nature and green spaces in the city. Each pocket park costs around €120,000 and smaller ones can even be set up with a lower budget.
- The “tea & time” in [Leeds](#), or “tea & conversations” is a simple yet fundamental principle in Leeds. The management of the Leeds Museum & Galleries (LMG) service is done from a “personalised” point of view, by talking to and investing in people at all levels of the hierarchy, and by communicating core values to the staff so that they feel that their contribution is valued. These principles are applied withing the LMG service itself but also when working with communities and partners. This kind of informal and open atmosphere led to the creation of a new podcast, Museums n’That, recorded and produced in-house; it has been downloaded over 10,000 times across the world (with 11% of listeners from North America). In each episode, digital engagement officer Megan Jones and audience development officer Sara Merritt ask their LMG colleagues who work behind the scenes curious questions, like for example: “How do you taxidermy a caterpillar?”.
- The [Budapest 100 Festival](#), which aim and headline is “exploring the built heritage to strengthen communities”. One of the main objectives is to raise awareness of cultural heritage values for residents of buildings celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The idea is to help owners, residents, and visitors to learn more about their surrounding built heritage and environment. Through guided visits of selected houses and apartments, both places with historic values and places that are not so much attractive are showcased. Visitors and residents share stories and knowledge and get to know each other. The organisers emphasize the idea that every house is interesting (not only outstanding architecture or which is protected by law). Each edition of the festival is organised with a budget of €25-30,000, which is mainly used to cover staff costs (€12,000), communication costs (€7,000) and material costs (€5,000).

These activities often provide a canvas for more ambitious projects. For instance, the pocket parks in Krakow demonstrate that small investments do improve the quality of life in cities, as the motto “Every little bit helps” says. In addition, trying out new uses in the pocket parks or new cooperation with stakeholders triggers further ideas for larger projects.

Interestingly, these low-threshold projects are also those that participants in peer-learning visits often refer to when asked to think of what they take back home. Indeed, these initiatives are actionable and can easily fit into broader programmes already planned or in motion.

## 3.2 THE LANDMARKS CULTURAL HERITAGE PROJECTS - LEARNING FROM PROCESSES AND TOOLS

Cultural heritage interventions across cities and regions are sometimes large infrastructural projects, which are very much rooted in their local contexts and are often emblematic of a particular city. Such projects may not seem particularly suited to learn from at first glance, especially since place-specific regulations and local strategies also come into play here. Nonetheless, a lot of soft processes and solutions can be set up elsewhere: there is always something to learn from such projects, especially when it comes to specific factors, tips, tricks and working methods.

Cultural Heritage in Action is rich of such examples. For instance, the case of Kaapeli in Helsinki is part of broader strategic aims for Helsinki, which include a clear policy for the temporary use of empty buildings. The city is undergoing an accelerated urban development, which has filled commercially attractive sites and left some in-fill plots in former industrial areas that are costly to repurpose. Kaapeli is a brilliant example of how abandoned buildings can be used as cultural resources to support creative and cultural development. It is a wholly owned Council real estate company that operates for-profit as an enabling organisation. The Kaapeli company can borrow against its assets and has a reliable income source from a long-term mixed tenant base of artistic, creative, sporting, and commercial organisations. While the scale of the initiative and type of building used are very much location specific, the operational model, which is more agile and flexible than a traditional municipal vehicle, is very much transferable. A particularly important point here is the opportunity to borrow money against future income, which enabled the premises to be redeveloped over time to suit the needs of the tenants and bring a former industrial heritage site into use as a valued cultural asset. This entails contained costs for the municipality and more freedom to operate for such cultural heritage spaces, with an incremental development of the facilities.

The Fortress of Culture in Šibenik is also an interesting example of large-scale cultural heritage projects with interesting lessons to apply in other contexts. In a nutshell, the Fortress of Culture organisation manages four landmark heritage sites across the city. It is a cornerstone for urban regeneration in Šibenik and for the redeployment of economic activities, which include wider plans to attract digital workers ('staycation') through new coworking spaces, as well as investment in higher education campus to attract young talents in Šibenik.

Two elements are particularly inspiring and adaptable to other places:

- The decentralized management model with tight linkages with public authorities: Fortress of Culture is independent from the city administration, but with a very strong cooperation. This has enabled flexibility in terms of developing the activities across the various sites and helped to channel important funding towards the various sites (around €12 million, notably thanks to European Regional Development Funds).
- o The friends' club (a membership scheme with a moderate fee, roughly the price of two tickets to Fortress of Culture), as well as the cooperation with local associations (e.g. tour guides) really help to make heritage matter to many citizens and to set up platforms for regular exchanges and two-ways communication.

Mistakes also matter; sharing what did not work well is an incredible time and resource-saver for participants, especially when initiating large-scale projects where more longitudinal processes need to be set up. For instance, initial feasibility analyses and studies can be informed by the challenges encountered in other places.

## 3.2 SEEDS OF CHANGE: INITIATIVES INSPIRED BY PEER-LEARNING EXCHANGES

New cooperations and more direct forms of transferability are another important contribution of Cultural Heritage in Action.

By involving an important number of professionals sharing similar challenges, Cultural Heritage in Action provides a fertile space for incubating the transfer of projects and ideas towards new cities and regions. The structured peer-learning model led to the emergence of new projects directly inspired by the initiatives discussed throughout the programme. For instance, the Door breakers project presented in Zaragoza has already inspired similar initiatives for participants in Sweden (Västmanland regional museum to maintain an open dialogue with the door breakers group to inspire its own youth programme) and in France (city of Pau launching a new scheme to co-develop a youth programme with apprentices in four cultural heritage institutions). The city of Iasi (Romania) has been inspired by the Leeds curriculum to provide new resources for teachers. Staff from the cultural heritage department is engaged in a marketing course to produce professional content and attract more visitors, based on the learning points of the peer-learning visit. Similarly, Ghent has been exchanging with Leeds on its cultural strategy and long-term vision on how to formulate and present the city's cultural policy and make it more participatory, as well as on how to manage power dynamics in the cultural ecosystem.

A core lesson learnt from Helsinki was to establish closer links with other city departments, especially in relation to acquisition and management of heritage properties for mixed use or multi-functional spaces that could be in part a resource for cultural activities and organisations, and in part more commercial uses. In the case of Torino, the collaboration was with public services to explore the integration of health professionals into a museum.

Other practices cited above have directly inspired multiple cities and regions, especially the low-threshold activities discussed in section 3.1. For example, in Gozo (Malta), the “tea and time” practice from Leeds will be replicated locally. Krakow's pocket parks have also led Amsterdam to develop a project on heritage values and sustainability in public spaces in cooperation between the cultural heritage and the environmental departments of the city, with the support of designers. Solin (Croatia) has already mapped out all spaces where trees could be planted to create small green cells in the city, using existing spaces, and will include citizens in future projects via a citizen's participatory budget.

Interestingly, some good practices identified were (at least partly) initiated thanks to previous EU-funded peer-learning projects. In the case of Leeds, the inspiration for their cultural educational programme came from a study visit on cultural education to Espoo and Helsinki, as part of the [Culture for Cities and Regions project](#) (2015-2017).



## FUTURE VISION FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ACTION

Cultural Heritage in Action has shown that cultural heritage can do a lot to address local challenges. It showed that European cities and regions constitute a pool of inspiration to learn from. It is also clear that cultural heritage is a constantly evolving policy area, and that innovative uses, new projects and new challenges are constantly emerging. Importantly, cultural heritage makes a crucial contribution to the main policy challenges our society is facing today and will face tomorrow, as explained above.

We therefore put forward below a vision of how cities and regions can further address crucial policy issues in the future, then set out a few policy recommendations for cities, regions and for European institutions.

Contribution to policy objectives	Recommendations for the future
<b>Recovery and resilience</b>  Cultural Heritage in Action showed that cultural heritage can help to revitalise rural areas, for example in Urriés where the 'Time Travel. Urriés Cultural Days' have generated strong local support and helped a rural area to bounce back after years of rural depopulation.	⇒ Break down remaining boundaries for heritage to become a true connector across cityscapes and various types of spaces (blue, green, built): heritage can help make such spaces more inclusive and can inspire future urban approaches, as envisioned by the New European Bauhaus.
<b>Competitiveness</b>  Examples from Cultural Heritage in Action show that heritage can generate important economic impacts, as in Šibenik where more than €1 million per year is raised by the Fortress of Culture in tickets sold, or in Reggio Emilia where cross-collaboration between cultural heritage and other sectors such as cultural and creative industries and ICT improved thanks to the development of a creative hub in a former cloister.	⇒ Value and activate cultural heritage for both its intrinsic economic potential. ⇒ Strengthen the spillover effects it can generate, for instance in terms of tourism, the reuse of spaces or the activation of heritage spaces as open hubs.
<b>Inclusion</b>  Improving social cohesion and inclusion by providing new frameworks for participation and community engagement, thus improving the sense of belonging; inclusive cultural heritage initiatives can be found in Zaragoza, where the Door breakers project directly empowers young participants as cultural managers, or in Ghent where the CircusKerk addresses populations from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.	⇒ Empower cooperation between citizens, professionals, and associations to preserve and nurture heritage in the long run. ⇒ What becomes heritage in the future will increasingly be the outcome of collective decisions; democratization of heritage will become an important aspect of heritage policies.
<b>Citizen participation</b>  Cultural Heritage in Action shows that the strong participatory element of cultural heritage initiatives is an opportunity to engage	⇒ Encourage the uptake of innovative management models, with a distributed model empowering the various



and empower citizens. Examples include events, walks, competition, food gatherings in Vantaa, or, in the city of Rijeka, a programme of artistic intervention aimed at triggering citizens' participation and engagement during the European Capital of Culture year in 2020.	stakeholders involved in cultural heritage co-management.
<b>Climate &amp; sustainability</b>	
Examples from Cultural Heritage in Action include the development of a recycle material bank for cultural production in Stockholm or the development of green museum programming models in Lille. Wider city strategies to combine culture and sustainability are developed in various cities like Dresden and Vantaa, too. Other cities are spearheading change towards more environmental-friendly behaviours through large-scale cultural heritage interventions, like Leeuwarden.	⇒ Leverage the unique power of cultural heritage to raise awareness and change behaviours at a large scale, by promoting bold and ambitious cultural heritage programming and commissioning.
<b>Digitisation</b>	
Cultural Heritage in Action identifies several digital innovations in heritage: in Rotterdam, the Dig it Up open-source digital archive enables citizens to collectively share memories, items and stories in a participatory approach. In Florence, the #feelFlorence app promotes unusual itineraries in the city centre, in neighbourhoods and in the metropolitan area, bringing tourists closer to local experiences and avoiding over-tourism.	⇒ Further develop unique cultural experiences with digital technologies and within digital spaces. ⇒ Make use of the potential value of cultural heritage intellectual property for digital purposes (e.g. by providing unique content for augmented reality/virtual reality digital landscapes).

Beyond these broader recommendations, Cultural Heritage in Action shows that **European peer-learning schemes for cities are smart investments**. Local leaders are committed to continuing efforts to become more resource efficient, more resilient, more inclusive and to work with citizens to understand their needs and deliver innovative solutions to local challenges. Sharing experience through peer-learning programmes such as Cultural Heritage in Action allows cities and regions to develop and grow while creating a sense of proximity with their European counterparts. It is important that they continue to learn from each other in the future to reinforce networking effects.

*“‘Think Europe’ is the best advice from one of the mentors. The projects that we are working on, should be considered as part of European heritage.”*

*“We as Europeans encounter similar cultural and heritage issues and can assist each other to resolve these issues.”*

- Participants to the peer-learning visit in Cantabria

At EU level, these peer-learning activities could be supported by:

- Developing long-term peer learning schemes for cities/regions under the model tested in Cultural Heritage in Action, with a simple model: a coordinating entity managing the running of the peer-learning model (either in-house or externalised), a pool of facilitators and regular

open calls for host cities/regions and visiting teams. The materials developed under Cultural Heritage in Action can form the basis for such future schemes.

- Activating mobility schemes on cultural heritage on the model of Culture Moves Europe model; mobilising INTERREG and/or URBACT funding programmes to support cross border mobility of cities and regions staff.
- Setting up regular conferences, workshops or meeting spaces focusing on actual knowledge transfer.

Cities and regions would greatly benefit from further peer-learning opportunities (notably through the newly created European Heritage Hub to be led by Europa Nostra and to be launched early 2023). The following topics could be addressed:

- **Good governance and smart use of data to help cities develop long term sustainable tourism policies**

Local governments should think in terms of partnerships. It is useful to work with local stakeholders – be they local communities, universities, relevant stakeholders, or private companies – because it helps create new types of cultural experiences and increases the overall quality of urban tourism. In cities and regions, partnerships also start at the administrative level. Long-term policy strategies are more likely to be successful if tourism specialists develop them in cooperation with other departments such as the culture, urban planning, economic development, mobility etc. Municipalities should also use data for better policymaking. The analysis of data on tourist flows can help adjust the type and quality of public services provided by cities, improve the management of public spaces, and increase the feeling of safety and well-being for both locals and visitors.

- **Enable dialogue with citizens and local organisations through collaborative spaces and tools**

Cultural heritage can be a focal point to nurture dialogues with various civil society organisations and cultural organisations. Ensuring there are safe, open spaces for discussions, with free communication and accessible language, is paramount. These spaces can be heritage buildings themselves, as well as digital participative tools. Be they digital or physical, these spaces should be open and accessible for citizens and local actors. The regular use of small ‘low-threshold’ activities helps to build momentum for such projects and connect to diverse groups.

- **Communities of practice: support professional exchanges and knowledge-sharing**

Initial guidance, templates and shared resources are highly valuable for heritage professionals, especially when developing projects involving diverse communities or dealing with sensitive or ‘dissonant’ heritage. A forum for professional exchanges is very much in demand, and associating policymakers from different departments and heritage professionals represents a great added value to design heritage policies and projects.

- **Develop tools for evaluation, monitoring and measuring impacts**

Cultural heritage makes an invaluable contribution to local and regional development, yet it is often still underestimated and undervalued. Cultural heritage policies and projects must be subject to research work (including strong statistics) and evaluation to monitor the impact of policy actions.



## CONCLUSION

Importantly, the development of a long-term peer-learning scheme would strengthen the capacity of cities and regions to address the wider policy issues discussed at the beginning of this section. Supporting cities and regions to do more together is a crucial yet simple way of delivering on EU's policy objectives. Having a long-term approach to such a scheme would also help to monitor and assess the impacts of peer-learning more regularly and could even help inform programmes and policies beyond the area of cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage can do a lot already, it can do even more in the future if adequately managed, supported, and nurtured!



Rivers of Sofia. Courtesy of Ani Kodjabasheva