



European Heritage Policy Agora 2025
“The Europeans: Shared Cultural Roots and Values”
including Europa Nostra Lecture by Orlando Figes & Dialogue with MEPs
Event co-hosted with the European Parliament

Wednesday, 15 October 2025
9:00 to 13:30
European Parliament, Zweig Visitor Centre
Free-of-charge event

Organised as part of the [European Heritage Summit 2025](#) and in the framework of the EU-funded network project Europa Nostra Heritage Agora

This event will also provide an important opportunity for representatives of the cultural sector and Members of the European Parliament to meet and discuss the key issues facing the next budget for culture.

This event will offer a most inspiring platform to (re)discover and celebrate Europe’s shared cultural roots and values. This year’s Policy Agora will bring together historians, policymakers, civil society and cultural leaders to explore how Europe’s rich and diverse heritage can foster unity amid diversity and address contemporary challenges.

Featuring a Europa Nostra annual lecture by the renowned British historian Orlando Figes, an expert panel discussion with Members of the European Parliament and a film screening, the Policy Agora will highlight the vital role of culture and history in shaping European identity and strengthening the European project.

European Heritage Policy Agora 2025

“The Europeans: Shared Cultural Roots and Values”

Programme

09:00 – 09:30 | Registration and coffee

09:30 – 10:15 | Opening remarks

Introductory speeches on the theme *Why Culture and History Matter for Today's Europe*

- Philipp Schulmeister, Director of Campaigns DG COMM: “Shaping Europe’s Future: the need of supporting cultural policy in the EU and the impact the MFF can have”
- Nela Riehl, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education (Volt Germany)
- Paul Dujardin, President of Europa Nostra Belgium and Council Member of Europa Nostra- TBC
- Representative of the European Commission (DG EAC)

10:15 – 11:00 | Europa Nostra Lecture* by Orlando Figes

Renowned historian Orlando Figes will deliver this year’s Europa Nostra’s Lecture based on his acclaimed book *The Europeans: Three Lives and the Making of a Cosmopolitan Culture*, which explores:

- The development of a transnational European cultural market in the 19th century
- The formative role of the arts in shaping European identity and unity
- The intertwined lives and European legacies of Pauline Viardot, Louis Viardot, and Ivan Turgenev

** The Europa Nostra Lecture Programme was created in 2023 at the initiative and thanks to the generous donation of Dr Peter Collins, Diamond Member of Europa Nostra from Oxford (UK), in memory of his late wife Margot Collins, who was a long-standing member and supporter of Europa Nostra.*

11:00 – 12:00 | Panel Discussion and Q&A session

Introduced with music composed by Pauline Garcia-Viardot performed by Cecilia Bartoli
(*With the kind permission of Decca Classics*)

Moderator:

- Sneška Quaadvlieg-Mihailović, Secretary General, Europa Nostra

Panellists:

- Laurence Farreng, Member of the European Parliament: CULT Committee (Renew Europe, France) - TBC

- Hannes Heide, Member of the European Parliament, CULT Committee (S&D Group, Austria) - TBC
- Helder Sousa Silva, Member of the European Parliament, CULT/BUDG Committees (EPP group, Portugal) and former Mayor of Mafra
- Jorge Chaminé, President, European Music Centre (CEM)
- Orlando Figes, historian and author
- Constance Itzel, Museum Director, House of European History

12:00 – 12:50 | Film viewing

The production team will introduce the documentary: *Une saga de l'Europe culturelle*. This "docufilm" complements the lecture and panel discussion by visually portraying the vast artistic and intellectual networks that flourished across Europe in the 19th century — echoing the themes of Orlando Figes' *The Europeans*.

12:50-13:30 | Light Lunch

Related works:

- *The Europeans: Three Lives and the Making of a Cosmopolitan Culture* by Orlando Figes
- [*Une saga de l'Europe culturelle, au cœur du XIXe siècle*](#) (Arte TV, Bel Air Média, Centre Européen de Musique and Centre d'Études d'Europe Hispanique)
[A Saga of Cultural Europe in the Heart of the 19th Century | CEEH](#)

Biography:

Orlando Figes was born in London in 1959. He taught at Cambridge University from 1984 until 1999, when he became Professor of History at Birkbeck College, University of London. He was made Emeritus Professor on his retirement in 2022.

He is best known for his works on Russian history. *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924* (1996) won a number of international prizes. His other books include *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (2002), *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (2007), *Crimea: The Last Crusade* (2010), *Just Send Me Word* (2012), *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991* (2014) and *The Story of Russia* (2022).

He is the author of *The Europeans: Three Lives and the Making of a Cosmopolitan Culture* (2019), a history of Europe's cultural integration in the nineteenth century told through the intertwined biographies of Pauline Viardot, the opera singer, her husband Louis Viardot, an art expert and theatre manager, and the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev.

His books have been translated into over thirty languages. He is also a playwright. His play *The Oyster Problem*, produced in London in 2023, is about the financial crisis of the writer Gustave Flaubert in the last years of his life and the attempts of his literary friends, George Sand, Emile Zola and Turgenev, to find him a sinecure.

He lives in Umbria in Italy, and is now a German citizen.