

European Heritage Hub Forum “Heritage Matters for Europe’s Cities and Citizens”

*Organised in the framework of the
[European Cultural Heritage Summit 2025](#)*

Also contributing to the [European Week of Cities and Regions 2025](#)

Venue: Brussels Town Hall, Gothic Room, Grand Place 1, Brussels, Belgium

Date: Tuesday 14 October 2025

10:30 - 18:00

In this decisive year for European policymaking on heritage, the **EU-funded [European Heritage Hub](#)** kicks-off its new phase as a Preparatory Action with its first in-person Hub Forum “**Heritage Matters for Europe’s Cities and Citizens**”, organised by Europa Nostra as project leader, in cooperation with the Hub consortium of partners, with the support of the **European Commission** and the **City of Brussels**.

This **high-level strategic policy dialogue**, taking place on 14 October in the iconic Brussels Town Hall on the occasion of the [European Cultural Heritage Summit 2025](#), will focus on two pivotal developments shaping the future of our shared heritage:

- The forthcoming presentation of the European Commission’s **Culture Compass for Europe**;
- The ongoing negotiations concerning the **2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**, alongside the European Commission’s proposed **AgoraEU Programme**.

This gathering offers a timely and inclusive space for **civil society organisations, municipalities, EU Institutions, experts and heritage professionals** to collectively reflect on how these instruments can better support **community-rooted heritage, civic participation, democracy and cultural rights** across Europe.

Based on the **fundamental values of the European Union** - human dignity, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, equality and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, solidarity, cultural diversity, and peace - this dialogue aims to ensure that policies connected to heritage are not only inclusive and democratic but also grounded in the experiences and aspirations of European cities and citizens.

As expressed in the Council of Europe's [Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society](#) (2005), which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2025, heritage plays a vital role in the development of democratic, sustainable and cohesive societies. Indeed, culture and cultural heritage are characterised by regional and national diversity, but also by a sense of community, a shared history and collective memory, which strengthen bonds, mutual understanding and values throughout Europe. This enormous value requires a stronger shift towards a more people-centred and rights-based approach to cultural heritage.

Local authorities and civil society: pillars of a heritage ecosystem which is values-based and community-driven

While national governments remain primary interlocutors for intergovernmental institutions, it is essential that **local and regional authorities**, in partnership with **civil society**, are placed at the heart of heritage policymaking at European level. These two constituencies are the closest levels of governance to citizens. Their collaboration is indispensable in ensuring that policies reflect **community needs**, uphold **cultural rights**, and promote **participatory governance for our common heritage** in line with European values.

The Culture Compass and the forthcoming EU budget (2028–2034 MFF) must recognise and reinforce the vital interdependence between civil society and local authorities. Together, they safeguard **cultural unity in diversity and promote fair and inclusive access to Europe's shared heritage** - embracing its many layers, from local to European identities.

As the Culture Compass nears completion and MFF negotiations intensify, this strategic dialogue provides a crucial opportunity to:

- Ensure the Culture Compass is responsive to the realities and needs of **local communities and civil society**;
- Align its priorities with the next MFF, particularly in terms of also **providing direct access to EU funding for local heritage and civil society actors in the field of cultural heritage**;
- Promote **Europe's shared values, vision and responsibility related to heritage, and multi-level governance** - extending from cities and regions to the EU institutions level.

This European Heritage Hub event aligns with the values set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, especially the commitment to cultural and linguistic diversity, equality, and the active participation of citizens in public life and also refers to Article 3.3: "The Union shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States. It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced."

Draft Programme

Master of Ceremonies: Manon Richard, Project Manager - European Heritage Hub, Europa Nostra

10:30 – 11:00 | Registration and welcome coffee

11:00 – 11:30 | Welcome and opening remarks

- **Hermann Parzinger**, Executive President of Europa Nostra and Chair of the European Heritage Hub Advisory Council
- **Philippe Close**, Mayor of Brussels (video message)
- **Normunds Popen**s, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), European Commission

11:30 – 12:00 | Introductory reflections

- **Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins**, Administrator, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (taking stock of 20 years since the adoption of the Council of Europe's Faro Convention), Portugal
- **Amra Hadžimuhamedović**, President and CEO of HIDR-Centre for Peace and Heritage
- **Bert Cornillie**, Alderman for Culture, Events, Part-Time Arts Education and Staff, City of Leuven, Belgium, and member of Eurocities

12:00 – 13:00 | Panel Discussion 1: Aligning the Culture Compass and the next MFF with community needs

Moderator: Harry Verwayen, General Director of the Europeana Foundation

Panellists:

- **Prof. Alexandra Xanthaki**, UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights, Greece (online)
- **Vesna Marjanović**, Secretary General of Europa Nostra Serbia
- **Lodovico Folin Calabi**, Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels
- **Anna Pohribna**, Deputy Director for Programmes at National Art and Culture Museum Complex Mystetskyi Arsenal, Ukraine (laureate of a European Heritage Award 2025 in category Citizens' Engagement and Awareness-Raising for the [All Together Festival](#))
- **Lars Ebert**, Secretary General of Culture Action Europe

13:00 – 14:30 | Lunch

14:30 – 15:30 | Panel Discussion 2: The Role of Local Authorities – Democracy, Sustainable Tourism and Solidarity

Moderator: Cristina Garzillo Leemhuis, Head of Socio-Cultural Transformations, ICLEI European Secretariat

Panellists:

- **Charalambos Prountzos** and **Mehmet Harmanci**, Leaders of the two Communities of the city of Nicosia, Cyprus
- **Nataša Vučković**, President of ALDA ([European Association for Local Democracy](#))
- **Jordi Pascual**, Coordinator of the Committee on Culture & Assistant Secretary General for Knowledge Co-creation, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (online)
- **Gaianè Casnati**, Scientific and Strategic Director, SIREH Center for the Study, Preservation, and Enhancement of Armenian Cultural Heritage and Council Member of Europa Nostra
- **Stefano Pisani**, Mayor of Pollica, former President of [Cittaslow International](#) (online)

15:30 – 16:30 | Concluding Session

Moderator: Sneška Quaadvlieg-Mihailović, Secretary General of Europa Nostra and Project Leader of the European Heritage Hub

Panellists:

- **Tanya Hristova**, 1st Vice-Chair of the SEDEC Commission, European Committee of the Regions, and Mayor of Gabrovo, Bulgaria
- **HRH Princess Dana Firas**, ICOMOS Vice President (Arab States Regional Group), President of Petra National Trust, and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Cultural Heritage
- **Androulla Vassiliou**, Vice-President of Europa Nostra and Chair of the Board of the Europa Nostra Heritage Hub in Nicosia
- **Hermann Parzinger**, Executive President of Europa Nostra and Chair of the European Heritage Hub Advisory Council

16:30 – 18:00 | Networking Drinks Reception