

Image: La Grand Place, with the historic Town Hall of Brussels © Catarina Belova / Shutterstock



**European
Heritage
Hub**

European Heritage Hub Forum

Heritage Matters for Europe's Cities and Citizens

14 October 2025 | 10:30 CET | Brussels



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EUROPEAN
CULTURAL HERITAGE
SUMMIT 2025



European
Heritage
Hub



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European Heritage Hub Forum

“Heritage Matters for Europe’s Cities and Citizens”

Organised by

Europa Nostra – the European Voice of Civil Society
Committed to Cultural and Natural Heritage

In the frame of

The European Heritage Hub EU-funded Preparatory Action

In partnership with

The European Heritage Hub project consortium
European Commission

With the cooperation and support of

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European Heritage Hub Forum

“Heritage Matters for Europe’s Cities and Citizens”

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Concept

The fourth edition of the European Heritage Hub Forum, “Heritage Matters for Europe’s Cities and Citizens”, will focus on the pivotal European policy developments shaping the future of our shared heritage.

The Forum comes at a crucial time for cultural heritage and European policymaking, as the European Commission’s Culture Compass nears completion and negotiations around the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), which sets the EU budget from 2028–2034, are intensifying.

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 — the Forum 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.

Objectives and Outcomes

- 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.

Draft Programme

European Heritage Hub Forum

“Heritage Matters for Europe’s Cities and Citizens”

Venue: [Brussels Town Hall](#), Gothic Room, Grand Place 1, Brussels, Belgium

Date and Time: Tuesday, 14 October 2025, 10:30 - 18:00

The event is organised in the framework of the [European Cultural Heritage Summit 2025](#) and contributes to the [European Week of Cities and Regions 2025](#).

Master of Ceremony: **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**, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), European Commission

11:30 – 12:00

Introductory reflections

- **Haris Doukas**, Mayor of Athens, Greece
- **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
- **Bert Cornillie**, Alderman for Culture, Tourism, Festivities, Artistic Education and Elderly People, 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:

- **Marcos Ros Sempere**, Member of the European Parliament (CULT Committee), Spain
- **Prof. Alexandra Xanthaki**, UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights (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](#))

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](#))
- **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](#)



15:30 – 16:30

Concluding Session

Moderator: **Sneška Quaedvlieg-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**, President of Petra National Trust and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Cultural Heritage

— **Androulla Vassiliou**, Chair of the Europa Nostra Heritage Hub in Nicosia and Vice-President of Europa Nostra

16:30 – 18:00

Networking Drinks Reception



Practical information

Venue: [Brussels Town Hall](#)

Dresscode

The dress code is business casual. Please note that you are required to wear your participant badge at all times. Badges can be collected at the registration desk at the Brussels Town Hall. A cloakroom will be available.

Transportation

How to get to Brussels Town Hall from:

- Brussels Airport Zaventem
 - **Taxi:** TaxisVerts, +32 02 349 49 49
 - **Uber:** Pick up from P1 Parking, floors 4 and 5
 - **Train:** Take the EuroCity IC train to Brussel-Centraal Station, and it is a 7 minute walk
- Brussels South Charleroi Airport
 - **Taxi:** TaxisVerts, +32 02 349 49 49
 - **Bus/Train:** Take a Flibco Bus to Brussels Midi Station; Switch to train to Brussel-Centraal Station or switch to the 4/10 Tram and get off at Beurs. It is a 6 minute walk from Beurs.

Note: Strike on 14 October

Several disruptions are expected on 14 October due to a national strike in Belgium, with probable impact on public transport and flights.

List of Speakers

Gaianè CASNATI

Philippe CLOSE

Bert CORNILLIE

HRH Princess Dana FIRAS of Jordan

Lodovico Folin CALABI

Haris DOUKAS

Cristina Garzillo LEEMHUIS

Mehmet HARMANCI

Tanya HRISTOVA

Vesna MARJANOVIĆ

Guilherme d'Oliveira MARTINS

Hermann PARZINGER

Stefano PISANI

Anna POHRIBNA

Normunds POPENS

Charalambos PROUNTZOS

Sneška QUAEDVLIEG-MIHAILOVIĆ

Manon RICHARD

Marcos Ros SEMPERE

Androulla VASSILIOU

Harry VERWAYEN

Nataša VUČKOVIĆ

Alexandra XANTHAKI



Gaianè CASNATI

**Scientific and Strategic Director,
SIREH Center for the Study,
Preservation, and Enhancement of
Armenian Cultural Heritage and
Council Member of Europa Nostra**

Gaianè Casnati is an architect-restorer focused on Armenian cultural heritage. Council Member of Europa Nostra and member of the Advisory Panel of the “7 Most Endangered” programme, she works between Europe and Armenia.

She is the founder and Strategic and Scientific Director of SIREH Center for the Study, Preservation and Enhancement of Armenian Cultural Heritage, co-founded with the Armenian Society of Fellows (ASOF) within the ArCH initiative. SIREH connects Armenian stakeholders and the diaspora with international partners and serves as the Armenian Heritage Hub within the European Heritage Hub initiative led by Europa Nostra.

Her work spans international cooperation, heritage education, programme design, and policy-oriented advocacy. She promotes evidence-based, inclusive preservation that strengthens cultural identity and resilience, building partnerships across civil society, institutions, and global experts. Her advocacy includes speaking and moderating at international conferences, roundtables, and policy dialogues on risk preparedness, training, and community-driven conservation, and convening cross-sector meetings that align local needs with European initiatives.

Recognition includes Europa Nostra Awards (2015, 2023) and gold medals from the Ministry of Culture of Armenia and the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia (NUACA).



Philippe CLOSE

Mayor of Brussels

Philippe Close was born on 18 March 1971.

As a graduate in Law at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, he began his career as a parliamentary employee in charge of institutional affairs with Senator Roger Lallemand.

In 1999, he was hired by Elio Di Rupo, at the Institut Emile Vandervelde, the study centre of the Parti Socialiste (PS). In 2000, he became his spokesperson and in 2001 he joined the team of Freddy Thielemans, Mayor of the City of Brussels, as Head of Cabinet.

In 2006, Philippe Close participated for the first time in the municipal elections and was elected. He became Alderman of Staff and Tourism. Since the 2012 elections, he has also been in charge of the finances of the City.

In 2009, Philippe Close was elected member of Parliament of the Brussels Capital Region, where he was chairman of the Social Affairs Committee. In 2013, he was appointed group leader of the PS.

In June 2017, he became Mayor of the City of Brussels. In order to fully devote himself to his task, he resigned as a member and group leader of the Brussels Parliament. At the end of the legislature, on 14 October 2018, he was re-elected as Mayor for the next 6 years.

In his private life Philippe Close loves rugby and music. He also has two children.

Credit: [City of Brussels](#)



Bert CORNILLIE

**Alderman for Culture, Events,
Part-Time Arts Education and Staff,
City of Leuven, Belgium, and member
of Eurocities**

Bert Cornillie is the alderman for culture, events, arts education, and staff at the city of Leuven. He was elected as a Leuven council member in 2018 (Vooruit, social-democrats) and became alderman in 2023, with a reelection in 2024. Ex officio, Bert is the president of Museum M, Leuven's cultural center 30CC, and festival organiser Leuvenement.

In addition, he is a member of several culture-related boards of institutions such as STUK, Parcum, Festival 20 21, Het Depot, and OPEK. As of 2025, he is also a board member of the VVSG (Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities) and president of the "Strong governments" committee.

Besides politics, he is a part-time professor of Spanish Linguistics at KU Leuven. His main research interests are historical and interactional linguistics. Bert had student and research stays in Valencia, Sevilla, Mexico, and Santa Barbara, California. In previous years, Bert Cornillie was the secretary of the [SLE: Societas Linguistica Europaea](#) (2018-2024), member of the FNRS-committee Sciences Humaines 3 (2017-2023), president of the [Linguistic Society of Belgium](#) (2017-2020), member of the KU Leuven Academic Council (2016-2019), member of the [LOT Curriculum Commission](#) (2009-2015), coordinator of the Research Unit FunC (2010-2015) and SLE conference manager (2008-2013).



HRH Princess Dana FIRAS of Jordan

**President of Petra National Trust
and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador
for Cultural Heritage**

HRH Princess Dana Firas is a global advocate for heritage protection and preservation. She was designated a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador in June 2017 in recognition of her commitment to heritage protection and preservation as pillars for sustainable development, and her contribution to responsible tourism and community participation.

She is the President of the Petra National Trust, Jordan's oldest national nongovernmental organization for heritage protection and preservation. She serves as President of ICOMOS-Jordan, which she established in 2019. She is a founding member of the board of The Mohammad and Mahera Abu Ghazaleh Foundation. Between 2016-2020, she served on the Board of the Fulbright Commission in Jordan.

Internationally, Princess Dana is leading a global campaign to streamline culture into climate policy with partners from the Climate Heritage Network (CHN). She is the CHN Envoy to the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action launched at COP28 and co-Chaired by the United Arab Emirates and Brazil, whose aim is to achieve a Joint Work Decision on Culture-Based Climate Action at the UNFCCC. In December 2023, Princess Dana joined the Advisory Council of the European Heritage Hub.

Princess Dana serves as Chair of the Board of the Petra National Foundation and, since 2018, has been the Patron of the Friends of Manar al-Athar. In 2021, she became an Ambassador for the UK-based International National Trusts Organization (INTO) and now serves as its Chair. She served as Co-Chair of the Climate Heritage Network's COP27 and COP28 Working Groups. In 2023, Princess Dana joined the international board of the UK-based Turquoise Mountain Trust. She was elected in September 2023 to the position of Vice President for the Arab Region of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

Since the early 1990s, HRH has worked to promote cultural heritage preservation, education and sustainable development in various capacities in the private, public and civil society sectors, both in Jordan and internationally. She worked at the

Royal Hashemite Court from 1993 to 2000 on projects that promote cultural heritage, sustainable development, peace, and human rights.

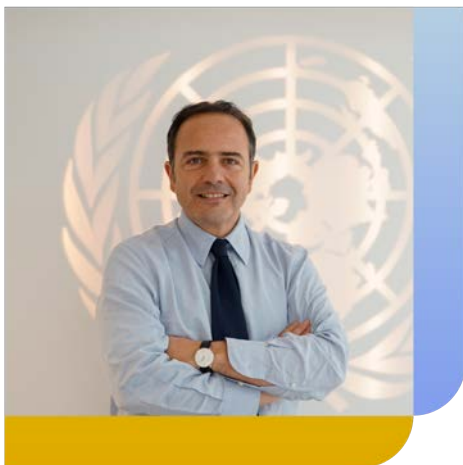
In January 2022, His Majesty King Abdullah bestowed the order of the State Centennial on Princess Dana in recognition of her contributions to the field of cultural heritage in Jordan.

Princess Dana is the recipient of the Arab Heritage Person Award for 2018, the first woman and the first Jordanian to be selected for this award. The World Monuments Fund recognized her with the 2019 Watch Award for her lifelong work in cultural heritage and advocacy for preservation as a stimulus for economic development. In November 2019, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Coventry University.

In October 2022, Princess Dana published *Unique and Outstanding: Jordan's World Heritage Sites*, for which the UNESCO Director General, Mrs. Audrey Azoulay, wrote the foreword. She is the author of a number of articles, including "From the Environment and Human Security to Sustainable Security and Development" in the *Journal of Human Development* (2003), in the *State of the World Report* (2007), and in *Tourism and Archeological Heritage Management at Petra: Driver to Development or Destruction* (2012). She has had a number of guest television appearances, including *Human Flow*, a documentary film on the refugee crisis by artist Ai Wei Wei.

Her Royal Highness holds a BA degree in Economics and International Relations from Boston University, an MSc in Development Studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science and an MPA from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, where she was a Fulbright Scholar.

She is married to HRH Prince Firas bin Raad and has two daughters and a son.



Lodovico Folin CALABI

**Director of the UNESCO Liaison
Office in Brussels**

Lodovico Folin Calabi was appointed as UNESCO Representative to the European Union in March 2025. Prior to this, he served as Senior Crisis Coordinator at UNESCO Headquarters, leading the organization's overall response to the war in Ukraine (2022-2024) and was Chief of Taskforce in the Director-General's Cabinet (2019-2022), supervising the Organisation's flagship recovery and reconstruction initiatives Revive the Spirit of Mosul (since 2019) and Li Beirut (since 2020), coordinating the large-scale efforts for the reconstruction and recovery of the Old City of Mosul in Iraq and of Beirut after the August 2020 blast.

He has been UNESCO Representative to Palestine and Head of the UNESCO National Office for Palestine from 2014 to 2019. From 2012 until 2014, he was the UNESCO Representative to Libya and Head of the UNESCO Project Office in Tripoli, where he coordinated the reactivation of UNESCO's overall development cooperation with Libya after the 2011 conflict.

Previously, Lodovico Folin Calabi worked with the UNESCO Culture Sector since 2003, first at the World Heritage Centre until July 2011, and then at the Executive Office of the Assistant Director-General, where he was in charge of the overall coordination of the UNESCO flagship initiative "Culture: a Bridge to Development" in South-East Europe. His work also focused on historic cities and contemporary development and he coordinated the steps leading to the adoption of the UNESCO's Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape.

He previously coordinated the World Heritage related training and research centres established under UNESCO's auspices in China, Bahrain, Brazil, Mexico, Norway, South Africa, Spain and Italy. Lodovico studied international corporate law and holds a Ph.D. in Urban History, with a thesis on the urban development of São Paulo, Brazil, and is an alumnus of the U.S. Department of State's "International Visitor Leadership Programme".



Haris DOUKAS

Mayor of Athens

Haris Doukas is the Mayor of Athens and Professor at the School of Electrical & Computer Engineering of NTUA.

His scientific and research expertise includes the development of decision support systems for energy and climate policy, placing the human factor at the core of the modelling processes.

He has almost 2 decades of working experience in the design of policies and programs for the promotion of renewables, energy efficiency and management at a national, European level as well as in Africa and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf.

He has more than 150 scientific publications in international scientific journals with reviewers, he co-authored the Greek Book “Multiple Criteria Decision Models for Energy and Environmental Systems”, the English Book “Multicriteria Portfolio Construction with Python” and the open access Book “Understanding Risks and Uncertainties in Energy and Climate Policy: Multidisciplinary Methods and Tools for a Low Carbon Society”.

Credit: [City of Athens](#)



Cristina Garzillo LEEMHUIS

**Head of Socio-Cultural
Transformations, ICLEI
European Secretariat**

Cristina Garzillo Leemhuis is Head of Socio-Cultural Transformations at ICLEI. Having more than 20 years of experience working in and for local governments, Cristina is recognised for her work as expert in local sustainability processes, culture and cultural heritage, integrated management and governance as well as author of numerous publications in the field of local sustainability, knowledge brokerage and transition.

Cristina has been appraiser and expert for the URBACT Programme, the Urban Innovative Actions Initiative, the European Committee of the Regions and United Nations. She is currently a member of the European Commission's Expert Group on Culture and Cultural Heritage, the Partnership on Sustainable Tourism of the Urban Agenda for the EU, and the New European Bauhaus community. Cristina also draws on a wealth of academic experience from her previous role as a contract professor at the University of Parma.



Mehmet HARMANCI

Leader of the Turkish Community of the city of Nicosia, Cyprus

Mehmet Harmancı was born in 1977 in Nicosia. He holds a BA in International Relations from the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) and a Master's degree on EU and Politics from the John Moores University.

He started his political career in the Communal Liberation Party (TKP) and subsequently joined the pro-Annan Plan alliance Peace and Democracy Movement (BDH). Following the merger of these two parties, Harmancı served various roles at the social democratic Communal Democracy Party (TDP), including as the party's Secretary General.

Harmancı was also active in civil society and managed various internationally funded projects in Cyprus, including the bicommunal "Engage – Do Your Part for Peace" Project implemented jointly by the Management Centre of the Mediterranean in the north and the NGO Support Centre in the south. Mehmet Harmancı also has experience in the private tourism sector, working as the General Director of a tourism company in north Cyprus for many years.

After serving as the Turkish Cypriot Minister of Tourism, Environment and Culture in 2013, Harmancı was elected as the Mayor of Nicosia Turkish Municipality in June 2014. Having been re-elected twice in 2018 and 2022, Harmancı is currently serving his third term as the mayor. He continues to be a leading advocate in the Turkish Cypriot community for the reunification of Cyprus.



Tanya HRISTOVA

**1st Vice-Chair of the SEDEC
Commission, European Committee
of the Regions, and Mayor of
Gabrovo, Bulgaria**

Tanya Hristova was born on 19 July 1971 in the town of Pleven. In 1995 she graduated with a Master's degree in English Philology at the University of Veliko Tarnovo; she has also obtained a Master's degree in Finance at the same university.

Hristova has been the Mayor of Gabrovo, Bulgaria since 2011. She is leading the Bulgarian delegation of local authorities to the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, where she has been a member since 2012. Currently, she is also Chair of the Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC), and has been Chair of the Governing Council of the Municipal Energy Efficiency Network "EcoEnergy" since 2015.

Credit: [Energy Cities](#)



Vesna MARJANOVIĆ

**Secretary General,
Europa Nostra Serbia and
Council Member, Europa Nostra**

Vesna was a political activist when, after years of conflict, democratic reforms started in Serbia witnessing the hopes and frustrations of a changing society that did not succeed in placing cultural policies into mainstream government strategies. Member of the Serbian Parliament and Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Culture and the Media (2007-2011, 2012-2016). Member of the City Council of the City of Belgrade and Chair of the Board of the Belgrade International Film Festival – FEST (2011-2012). She was the Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2012 to 2016) where she held the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee on Culture, Education, Science and Media and Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee on Culture, Diversity and Heritage. She was Rapporteur on “Europe’s Endangered Heritage”, “Culture and Democracy” and for the Council of Europe Museum Prize.

Since 2021, she is active as Secretary General of Europa Nostra Serbia. Since then, the country representation of Europa Nostra in Serbia has launched the Heritage Heroes Award Scheme with the EU Delegation in Serbia, for dedicated service in the field of cultural heritage and has organised a first civil society international Belgrade Heritage Forum in Belgrade, in May 2023 in partnership with Europa Nostra, EU Delegation in Serbia and the Delphi Economic Forum.

Founder of the Center for Democracy Foundation, Belgrade, Serbia.

Vesna believes that cultural heritage has an infinitely important democratic role to reach far, educate all and give us a better understanding of humanity. She graduated from the Belgrade University Law School.



Guilherme

d'OLIVEIRA MARTINS

**Administrator, Calouste
Gulbenkian Foundation**

Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins was born in 1952. He holds a Masters Degree in Juridical and Economic Science from the University of Lisbon. He is currently Trustee of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. President of the Grand Council of the CNC – Centro Nacional de Cultura (National Centre for Culture). University Professor at the University Lusíada and the Technical University of Lisbon.

He is a correspondent member of the Portuguese Academy of Sciences, member of the Portuguese Naval Academy, member of merit of the Portuguese Academy of History, and corresponding Member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters – Chair 20.

Oliveira Martins is chairman of the General Assembly of the World Monuments Fund, Chairman of the Advisory Board of Banco Português do Fomento (2024) President of the General Council of the Open University (2025)

He was previously Chairman of the Fiscal Council of Caixa Geral de Depósitos, President of the Tribunal de Contas (Portuguese Court of Auditors), National Coordinator of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, President of the Council for the Prevention of Corruption. President of EUROSAI, President of the Contact Committee of the Heads of the Supreme Audit Institutions of the European Union, General-Auditor of the Assembly of the West European Union, First Vice President of EUROSAI, Minister of Presidency, Minister of Finance, Minister of Education, Secretary of State for Educative Administration, Member of the Portuguese Parliament, Vice-Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Socialist Party, President of SEDES (Association for Economic and Social Studies), Vice-President of the Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO, Political Adviser of the President of the Republic, Secretary General of the Portuguese Committee of the European Cultural Foundation, Head of Cabinet of the Minister of Finance, Member of the European Convention on the Future of the Europe, President of the Steering Committee of the Council of Europe, which has adopted the Framework Convention on the Value of Heritage for Society (in Faro, Portugal) and National Coordinator of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.



Hermann PARZINGER

**Executive President of Europa Nostra
and Chair of the European Heritage
Hub Advisory Council**

Prof. Dr. Hermann Parzinger is Archaeologist and was from 1990 to 2008 first Director and later President of the German Archaeological Institute (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, DAI) and has conducted for more than 30 years field research in many European countries as well as in the Near East and in Central Asia.

From 2008 to 2025 he was President of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, SPK). Consisting of 27 museums, libraries, archives, and research institutions, the SPK is one of the largest cultural institutions in the world, and its collections include all areas of cultural traditions from archaeological and ethnological objects to the visual arts, literature and music. As President of the SPK, Hermann Parzinger was in charge of two major cultural projects: The renovation of the world-famous Museum Island and the realization of the Humboldt Forum in the reconstructed Berlin Palace; he was one of the founding directors of the Humboldt Forum.

For almost 40 years he was teaching Prehistoric Archaeology at the Universities of Munich, Frankfurt and Berlin, from 1996 to 2024 he was appointed Honorary Professor at Free University in Berlin. Hermann Parzinger has received many awards, among them the Leibniz Prize, the highest scientific award in Germany. He holds several international Honorary Doctoral degrees, he is member of Academies of Sciences in Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Rumania, Russia, China and the USA and has received decorations from Germany, Russia, Spain and Italy. Since 2018 he has been Executive President of Europa Nostra.



Stefano PISANI

**Mayor of Pollica, former President
of Cittaslow International**

Originally from Pollica, Stefano Pisani, a chartered accountant by profession, chose from a young age to devote himself to his local area and to commit himself to the community, since, as Ernest Hemingway believed, “the world is a fine place and worth fighting for”.

He was a student representative at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Salerno, actively involved in student associations, always attentive to political dynamics and their socio-economic repercussions. His entry into politics in 2005 was therefore a necessary step in a journey that began long ago, resumed after a brief pause for reflection and a meeting with Angelo Vassallo. Appointed deputy mayor of Pollica, he held this position for two terms until the brutal murder of Mayor Pescatore in September 2010.

He is a member of the National Council of Legambiente, an Italian environmental association, which awarded the Municipality of Pollica first place in the 5 Sails ranking compiled with the Touring Club in 2011 and 2012, the same years in which FEE Italia also awarded the Authority the Blue Flag for the beaches and tourist port of Acciaroli. In 2012, he joined the ANCI Environment Commission and participated as a delegate in the Ministry of the Environment's Marine Strategy Technical Committee for the definition of the European strategy for the marine ecosystem. He is a member of the Executive Council of Federparchi - Association of Italian Parks. In September 2012, he received the UNESCO Michelangelo Medal for the initiative “One Hundred Mayors for Beauty and Landscape”. In 2014, he was appointed International President of the Cittaslow Association – Cities of Good Living in the Netherlands.

Among the most significant operations undertaken by the Pisani administration are the activation of the only fuel distributor for recreational boating in Italy under complete municipal management and the activation of the “Mediterranean Diet” Study Centre – Angelo Vassallo for the promotion of UNESCO recognition – “Mediterranean Diet Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity”, obtained in November 2010.

Credit: [Comune di Pollica](#) (translated from Italian)



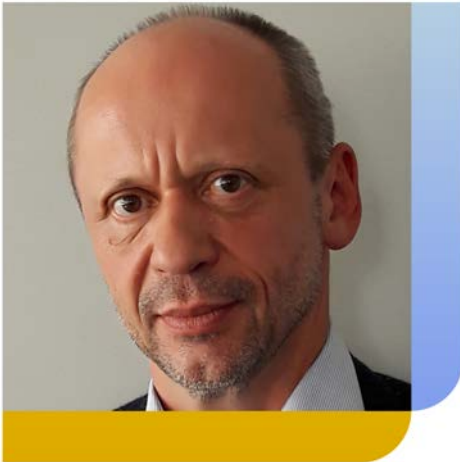
Anna POHRIBNA

**Deputy Director for Programmes,
National Art and Culture Museum
Complex Mystetskyi Arsenal, Ukraine**

Anna is Deputy Director for Programmes at Mystetskyi Arsenal, overseeing museum and contemporary art programmes, education, and fundraising. In 2025, Mystetskyi Arsenal's annual project All Together Festival received the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards in the Citizens' Engagement & Awareness-raising category. From 2017 to 2021, she managed major exhibitions and curated related publications at Mystetskyi Arsenal.

Before that, she worked at CSM/Foundation Centre for Contemporary Art, leading projects focused on public space, participatory practices, and community development. Anna has broad experience in project evaluation and capacity-building initiatives.

Since 2024, Anna has served as project leader on behalf of Mystetskyi Arsenal in the Room for Heritage capacity-building and networking programme. Delivered by a consortium of institutions with the support of the Partnership Fund for a Resilient Ukraine, the programme addresses the urgent need to safeguard and reinterpret Ukraine's cultural heritage amid the full-scale Russian invasion.



Normunds POPENS

**Director-General, Directorate-General
for Education, Youth, Sport and
Culture (DG EAC), European
Commission**

Since January 2024, Normunds Popen has been the Deputy Director General in the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.

From 2011, Popen has been the Deputy Director General for Implementation in the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission and in charge of overseeing the implementation of structural and cohesion fund programmes in EU member states and candidate countries.

Before joining the European Commission in March 2011, he occupied several posts in the Latvian diplomatic services.

Notably, from 2007 until 2011, he was the Permanent Representative of Latvia to the EU.

Before that, he dealt with European affairs as Undersecretary of State of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has also been responsible for the issues of foreign trade and transatlantic relations and has worked as an Ambassador in Norway, Iceland, and in the United States as a diplomat.



Charalambos PROUNTZOS

**Leader of the Greek Community
of the city of Nicosia, Cyprus**

Charalambos Prountzos became the first Mayor of the newly unified Municipality of Nicosia, elected in 2024, following the reform of local authorities in Cyprus.

A graduate of the University of Bristol (LLB, 2001) and Barrister-at-Law (Inns of Courts School of Law in London), he also received a Diploma in Professional Legal Skills from City University, London. He is a member of the Gray's Inn, the Cyprus Bar Association and the Board of Directors of CIFA.

Founder and Managing Partner of *Prountzos & Prountzos LLC* from 2010 until he became the Mayor of Nicosia, he also led legal services for a Big 4 firm (2019–2023) across 32 countries, managing over 500 professionals. With expertise in regulated markets, competition law, M&A, data protection, energy, and infrastructure, he is recognized as a leading voice in renewable energy and waste management.

Charalambos has successfully handled landmark constitutional, employment and public procurement cases.

Beyond the law community, he has held key roles in higher education and research, serving as Vice Chairman and later Chairman of the Open University of Cyprus, and as a Board Member of CYENS, a Centre of Excellence in technology and innovation.

He was also part of the Governance & Power Sharing Working Group during the Cyprus negotiations (2015–2017).

An active public figure, Charalambos frequently contributes to social, cultural, and policy debates.



Sneška

QUAEDVLIEG-MIHAILOVIĆ

**Secretary General of Europa Nostra
and Project Leader of the European
Heritage Hub**

Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic has dedicated her life to championing Europe's shared values and shared cultural heritage, working for Europa Nostra for over three decades and assuming the role of Secretary General in 2000. She regularly interacts and works closely with all EU institutions, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and numerous public and private bodies committed to cultural heritage at all levels of governance, from local to global.

A prominent figure in the European cultural and cultural heritage circles, Sneška is the leader of the pioneering EU-funded European Heritage Hub pilot project and serves as a spokesperson for the European Heritage Alliance. She also serves on the EC Expert Group on Cultural Heritage. Her multi-faceted activities extends to culture-based climate action as regional co-Chair of the Climate Heritage Network. She is a member of the EUYO Advisory Council and a member of the Council of the [European Music Centre](#) in Bougival.

Before joining Europa Nostra, Sneška worked for the EU Institutions in Brussels and Belgrade. She was one of the founders and first Secretary-General of the European Movement in Yugoslavia. Sneška holds a graduate degree in International Law (Belgrade, former Yugoslavia) and a postgraduate degree in European Law and Politics (Nancy, France).

In 2022, [Sneška was elevated to the rank of Knight of the national order of the Legion of Honour](#) for her “unreserved commitment to the preservation of heritage in Serbia and more widely in Europe” and “dedication and commitment to the cultural dimension of the European project”.

In 2024, Sneška was appointed as a foreign member of the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, a prestigious academic institution that for almost 200 years has promoted science, humanities and the arts in Venice and Italy as well as in Europe and globally.



Manon RICHARD

**Project Manager - European
Heritage Hub, Europa Nostra**

Since 2023, Manon has been the project manager of the EU-funded European Heritage Hub project. In this position, she ensures the successful implementation of the project, liaises with institutional and civil society partners, as well as focuses on the broadening and amplification of the Hub activities in EU neighbouring countries.

Manon first joined Europa Nostra in The Hague in 2015 and has been working in networking, youth empowerment, communication and policy/advocacy activities. In 2020, she joined the Brussels Office of Europa Nostra to further nurture relations with a number of civil society and institutional partners, particularly the EU Institutions.

In 2023, Manon worked for an NGO in the food safety sector as a project and policy coordinator.

Manon holds a BA in Applied Foreign Languages and Business Studies (Université de Lorraine, Nancy, France) and a MA in European and International Political Science (Sciences Po Strasbourg, France). As part of her studies, she completed a traineeship at the Council of Europe (PACE, sub-committee on culture, diversity and heritage) in Strasbourg in 2014.

She enjoys traveling, discovering new cultures and making gastronomic experiences. In her free time, she practices long distance running and Hyrox.



Marcos Ros SEMPERE

**Member of the European Parliament
(CULT Committee), Spain**

Marcos Ros Sempere has been a Member of the European Parliament for the Group of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) since February 2020. He is also a member of the Committees on Culture and Education (CULT) and Regional Development (REGI), where since 2022 he has been spokesperson of the S&D group. In the CULT Committee, he has been co-rapporteur of the initiative report on the New European Bauhaus, an initiative that brings together interdisciplinary solutions in urban planning with measures such as the decarbonization of buildings to integrate the ecological transition into the life of EU citizens.

At the beginning of the 10th Parliamentary term, he was re-elected S&D Coordinator in the Committee on Regional Development at the European Parliament. Furthermore, he was elected as a representative of the European Parliament to serve on the European Commission's High-Level Group of Experts on Cultural Heritage.

Before his responsibility as a Member of the European Parliament, Ros Sempere worked eleven years as a professor of Urban Planning at the School of Architecture of Cartagena. He holds a doctorate in architecture, specializing in urban planning and has extensive experience in the rehabilitation of architectural heritage.



Androulla VASSILIOU

**Chair of the Europa Nostra Heritage
Hub in Nicosia and Vice-President of
Europa Nostra**

A lawyer by profession with a post graduate degree in International Relations, Androulla Vassiliou practiced law for 25 years and was the First Lady of Cyprus from 1988-1993.

Vassiliou entered politics in 1996 and was elected for two consecutive terms of 5 years each as a member of the Cyprus House of Representatives. She was appointed EU Commissioner for Health from 2008-2010, and in 2010 EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth. She retired from the European Commission at the end of 2014.

Since 2015, she has been a member of Europa Nostra and served the organisation as a member of its Council, as a member of the Jury for the European Heritage Awards, and as a Vice President.

Throughout her life, Vassiliou has been very active in a number of fields, such as human rights, and in particular gender equality, racial discrimination, the rights of the less privileged people of the society, and in the field of the arts and cultural heritage.

She is Vice President of the Council of the University of Cyprus, a member of the International Board of Trustees of the Cyprus Institute of Research and Education, and Chair of the Board of the 'Europa Nostra Heritage Hub in Nicosia'.

Vassiliou has been honored by the governments of France, Spain and Greece, as well as many Cypriot institutions.



Harry VERWAYEN

General Director of the Europeana Foundation

Harry Verwayen is the General Director of the Europeana Foundation, the organisation behind the common European data space for cultural heritage and other leading heritage innovation projects. Europeana works with museums, libraries, and archives across Europe to support their digital transformation and ensure that digitised cultural collections are accessible and reusable—for work, for education, or simply for enjoyment. This mission is driven by collaboration, open sharing, and the belief that digital access to culture can support an open, creative society.

Before joining Europeana, Harry was a senior consultant at Kennisland, an Amsterdam-based think tank, where he focused on business model innovation in the cultural sector. He holds a Master's degree in History from Leiden University and several MBA certificates from Nyenrode Business University. Earlier in his career, he spent over a decade in the academic publishing industry.

Harry has served on various boards and advisory groups, including Time Machine Organisation, I1IF, the Competence Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage, the European Heritage Awards, and the Khalili Foundation.

When he's not working, you might find him spending time in nature with his dog, on the tennis court, in the kitchen or behind a camera lens, exploring the world in black & white through a 50mm.



Nataša VUČKOVIĆ

President of ALDA

Nataša Vučković is the current President of ALDA (European Association for Local Democracy), elected during the 2024 ALDA Festival and General Assembly in Barcelona. She has been actively involved with ALDA since 2020, first as a Governing Board member and later as Vice President in 2023.

She represents the Center for Democracy Foundation (CDF) in Serbia, where she has held leadership roles (including Founder, Secretary General, and Executive Director) since 1994. Vučković has extensive experience in non-profit management, financial planning, fundraising, and project design and evaluation.

Her main areas of interest include democracy, the rule of law, fundamental rights, European integration, and socio-economic rights. She coordinates the Working Group for Chapters 2 and 19 (migration of workers, employment, and social policy) in Serbia's National Convention on the EU (NCEU).

Vučković also has a significant background in government, having served as a Member of the National Parliament of Serbia and on various parliamentary committees, including as President of the Committee on European Integration. She was also a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). She has published articles and provided training in areas such as EU integration, human rights, parliamentary procedures, and non-profit sector development, especially in the Western Balkans.



Alexandra XANTHAKI

UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights

Alexandra Xanthaki was appointed UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights in October 2021. She is Professor of Laws at Brunel University London, United Kingdom. A leading expert on cultural rights, Alexandra has published on cultural rights of minorities and indigenous peoples, cultural diversity, cultural heritage, balancing cultural rights with other rights and interests, and multicultural aspects of international human rights law.

Alexandra is Greek and completed her law degree in Athens Law Faculty and qualified as a lawyer. She then moved to the United Kingdom and completed a Masters degree (LLM) in 'Human Rights and Emergency Law' at Queen's University, Belfast. She pursued a doctorate at Keele University, UK, on the 'Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the United Nations' under the supervision of Patrick Thornberry. Her work on cultural rights of non-state actors is well-known and has been cited repeatedly in international documents. She has worked on issues relating to human rights with NGOs and civil society. Before taking up the mandate, Alexandra has worked closely with several mandates at the United Nations and has advised several States on human rights issues. She has also taught civil servants and lawyers in several parts of the world, including in Ukraine, Vietnam, South Africa and Malaysia.

Alexandra is a member of the Summer Human Rights Faculty in Oxford. In Brunel University London, she leads the Brunel side in an EU funded project of 13 partners on employing technology to push forward the integration of migrants. She has also worked with colleagues and NGOs to develop a prototype of an online game to advance the rights of children and their integration. Ms. Xanthaki is well known as the founder of the awarded Athens Refugee Project, where students have volunteered since early 2016 with refugee civil society organisations.

Credit: [United Nations Human Rights Officer of the High Commissioner](#)

About

Europa Nostra

Europa Nostra is the European voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting cultural and natural heritage. It is a pan-European federation of heritage NGOs, supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals, covering more than 40 countries. Founded in 1963, it is today recognised as the largest and the most representative heritage network in Europe, maintaining close relations with the European Union, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and other international bodies. Europa Nostra serves as the co-Chair of the Climate Heritage Network Europe Region.

Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through the 7 Most Endangered Programme. It celebrates excellence through the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards. Europa Nostra actively contributes to the definition and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage, through a participatory dialogue with European Institutions and the coordination of the European Heritage Alliance.

European Heritage Hub

The European Heritage Hub is an EU-funded project in the Preparatory Action phase bringing together heritage actors and initiatives across Europe to support the green, digital and social transformation of our society. The Hub officially launched as a pilot project in May 2023 for an initial duration of 2 years.

The Hub's mission is to build the resilience and capacity of the European heritage ecosystem, enabling it to effectively respond to the challenges resulting from the triple transformation while ensuring the sector's contribution is recognised. Its activities are amplified across the whole of Europe, including EU neighbouring countries with a special focus on Ukraine, Moldova, the Caucasus, and Western Balkans.

The European Heritage Hub is led by a consortium of over 25 partners, with Europa Nostra as the Project Leader.

European Heritage Hub Partners



European Heritage Hub Forum

“Heritage Matters for Europe’s Cities and Citizens”

Booklet

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