HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-07

Societal impact of cultural heritage

A Research and Innovation Action on how cultural heritage shapes participation, gender equality, cohesion and security in European societies.

Destination Innovative Research on European Cultural Heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries

Deadline	Topic budget	Per project	Type of action
23 September 2027	**€15 million**	**€2.5–3.0 million**	**RIA**
Single-stage, opens 13 May 2027	About 5 projects funded	Lump sum grant	Research and Innovation Action

Key data

Topic identifier HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-07	**Type of action** HORIZON-RIA – Research and Innovation Action
Call HORIZON-CL2-2027-01 – Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society – 2027	
Programme Horizon Europe, Cluster 2 (Culture, creativity and inclusive society), Cultural Heritage	
Funding model HORIZON Lump Sum Grant (HORIZON-AG-LS)	**Status** Forthcoming
Planned opening 13 May 2027	**Deadline** 23 September 2027 (single-stage)
Topic budget EUR 15,000,000 (2027), for about 5 grants	**EU contribution per project** EUR 2,500,000 – 3,000,000

Rationale

Destination

Innovative Research on European Cultural Heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries (2026-27)

Europe’s rich cultural heritage and strong creative industries not only reflect our past but also shape our future. It is by building on this foundation and developing our strengths that we can face the great challenges of our time with confidence and shape a desirable common future.

Europe's cultural heritage originates from the interaction between people and places through time and is constantly evolving[1]. Every citizen has a right to engage with the cultural heritage of their choice, while respecting the rights and freedoms of others, as an aspect of the right to participate freely in cultural life[2].



UNESCO-listed Medieval City of Rhodes, Porta Marina



J. Kastav, Dance of Death, Church of the Holy Trinity in Hrastovlje



G. Caoursin, Siege of Rhodes 1481, BnF: Fortification Repairs with Porta Marina

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Chiesa Santa Maria della Visitazione: Orchestra Virtuosi Italiani, Vivaldi, Le Quattro Stagioni

Europe's tangible and intangible cultural heritage and its cultural and creative industries (CCIs) are strategic assets that foster social cohesion, resilience and a sense of belonging. They employ more people than the automotive industry and

match the trade balance of food, drinks and tobacco combined. From multinationals to SMEs and micro enterprises, the sector creates jobs, especially for young people, and drives innovation across the whole economy, strengthening Europe's competitiveness and prosperity.

This destination adopts a people-centred perspective and places cultural heritage and the cultural and creative industries at the very heart of the European economy, its competitiveness and sustainability. R&I activities under this destination will be aligned with the main principles and objectives of the Culture Compass for Europe and support objectives such as circular and just fashion and textiles value-chains, social cohesion and resilience through arts, design and cultural practices and creative entrepreneurial ecosystems for regional development. R&I activities under this destination will support and strengthen European cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries essentially along the following lines:

Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

Unlocking the innovative power of cultural heritage and the CCIs is key to Europe's future prosperity and competitiveness. The CCIs drive innovation in their own sector and across the economy, shape new technologies and feed user-driven, open and cross-sectoral innovation, while adding cultural wealth, social cohesion and resilience.

R&I actions under this area will focus on boosting the innovation-driving role of the CCIs, on creative startups, on the impact of artificial intelligence technologies on creativity and CCIs, while ensuring that new technologies are fairly deployed, along with the contributions of artistic intelligence and soft skills, boosting a circular economy and global partnerships in cultural policies and CCIs, among other things.

Supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model

Cultural heritage, the arts and the CCIs have a crucial role to play for resilient and socially sustainable societies, shaping and strengthening the values that hold us together and give meaning and a sense of belonging.

R&I actions under this area will focus on boosting the role of culture, the arts and creative industries in contributing to well-being, to the social economy and in general the societal impact of cultural heritage. R&I actions will explore and strengthen the role of culture, heritage and CCIs in shaping the technologies of the future and focus on safeguarding intangible heritage and linguistic diversity, on sustainable cultural tourism and on countering illicit trafficking of cultural goods, among others.

Some actions funded under this Destination will need access to and/or generate data. Where appropriate, actions should leverage the data and services available through European Research Infrastructures federated under the European Open Science Cloud or included in the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) and the ESFRI roadmap, as well as data from relevant European Data Spaces. In particular, projects that produce data or digital tools of potential interest to cultural heritage institutions or researchers should, as appropriate, establish links to and/or consider integrating their results in the European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage (ECCCH)[3]. Particular efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of actions under this Destination is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).





EIT Culture & Creativity

The innovation ecosystems created and nurtured by the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), in particular the KIC “EIT Culture and Creativity”, may contribute to actions under this destination, and may as appropriate be considered by applicants.

R&I actions under this Destination will help ensure Europe’s sustainable prosperity and competitiveness, support people, strengthening our societies and our social model, contribute to protecting our democracy, upholding our values and boosting a global Europe, leveraging our power and partnerships. They will contribute to reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals and to building a stronger, more participatory and crisis-resilient society and economy. They will support the realisation of the full potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative industries as drivers of sustainable innovation and a European sense of belonging.

> **To maximise the impacts of R&I under this Destination in line with EU priorities, international cooperation is encouraged whenever relevant in the proposed topics.**

Scope

Cultural Heritage as a Driver for Social Cohesion and Resilience

Heritage is a dynamic resource that can foster societal resilience, intercultural dialogue, and a sense of belonging in increasingly diverse and fragmented societies.

It can contribute to social cohesion and resilience through arts, design and cultural practices. Thus, cultural heritage is central to the preservation of the social fabric and community cohesion. Understanding and amplifying the societal impact of cultural heritage is essential for reinforcing identity, cohesion, and global leadership based on shared values. Research proposals should explore how cultural heritage actively shapes civic engagement, social innovation, collective memory, and the transmission of democratic values.

A New Narrative for Europe

Moreover, it is crucial to develop new narratives around heritage — ones that are forward-looking, critically aware, and deeply connected to Europe's evolving values. Such work will not only strengthen Europe's internal cohesion but also position cultural heritage as a strategic asset in addressing global challenges.

Cultural Participation

In this context, social innovation could also translate into working with cultural heritage practitioners and custodians to explore how cultural heritage can solve some of today's societal challenges (achieving better social inclusion, social cohesion, well-being, and equality). Whereas previous research (including contributions by SSH disciplines) has widely explored developing heritage-based education, contribution of culture to rural development and cultural tourism, there are some fields that could benefit from more research: cultural participation and access to culture, with a focus on young people; gender roles and identities; a shared cultural heritage and shared responsibility in the light of security challenges.

Research projects should choose one of the following areas:

Area A
Cultural participation and access to cultural heritage

Area B
Gender roles and identities

Area C
Cultural heritage, cohesion and security

Area A
Cultural participation and access to cultural heritage

Access to culture, acquired through socialisation and education, plays a crucial role in shaping cultural practices and preferences. As mentioned in the Political Guidelines[4] for the European Commission, there is a need to improve access to cultural heritage, in particular for young people, and contribute to tackle cultural inequality and strengthen a sense of identity and belonging. In addition, attention should be paid to disadvantaged groups, eventually solidifying participatory culture and democracy and fostering a sense of stewardship towards cultural heritage.

Culture is a universal right

A Special Eurobarometer on Europeans' Attitudes Towards Culture[5], published in May 2025, showed that a majority of Europeans believe that their country and the EU should work more closely together when it comes to making arts and culture more accessible to everyone. Prior research[6] indicates that increased cultural participation can potentially enhance civic engagement, social inclusion, and democratic governance, and counteract alienation and social disengagement. However, research also indicates profound and multifaceted barriers to access. These barriers include, for example, geography, including the challenge of rural isolation; under-representation of minority groups; economic disparity.

Gaining the youth

The proposals should explore good practices for fostering access to cultural heritage, with a focus on young people and ways to empower them to take an active role in their communities and strengthen social cohesion. Proposals should also explore which are the main barriers for access to culture and effective means to increase cultural participation, identifying specificities for different types of groups.

The proposals should employ interdisciplinary and participatory methods to identify effective models for inclusive cultural participation. Results are expected to guide policies on cultural access, with recommendations, for

instance, for digital infrastructure, educational programmes, and cross-sector collaboration to foster inclusive citizenship.



Great Hospital of the Knights in Rhodes: Evaluating the Experience



Learning from Stakeholders



The Performance

Area B

Gender roles and identities

Including and Involving People

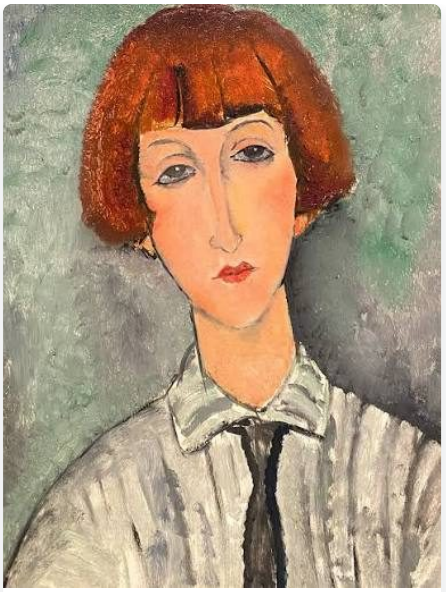
Cultural heritage has the power to promote diversity and inclusion by showcasing diverse narratives and histories, but it can also perpetuate inequality if stereotypes, cultural role models, and representations are limited or biased, silencing marginalised voices. The proposed research should explore the complex relationships between cultural productions, representations and societal attitudes towards different sexes and gender identities, with a focus on understanding how culture can shape our cultural landscape and influence our attitudes and imaginaries.

Reshaping a Commonwealth

Proposals should provide an analysis of the representation and overview of different gender identities and intersecting factors such as racial or ethnical background, disability or socioeconomic background, in cultural fields. Proposals should explore how gender aspects have been absent, or forgotten, in major supranational cultural narratives. Proposals should provide actionable recommendations on how to promote a more inclusive and diverse representation, including in the cultural content, and to address the absence of diverse representations in the cultural field. These recommendations should be developed in a dialogue with different stakeholders, for example researchers, policymakers, cultural heritage institutions, civil society representatives.



A. Modigliani, Woman in Black Tie



A. Modigliani, Young Girl with a Striped Blouse



A. Modigliani, Woman with Blue Eyes

Area C

Cultural heritage, cohesion and security

Supporting the FIMI

The proposed research should explore the role and conceptualisation of cultural heritage as a distinctive element of our shared identities and democratic values. It should also examine the links between culture and security including issues of disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) etc. Proposals are expected to explore the notions of shared heritage and shared responsibility as an expression of our social interdependence, and culture as a factor of union and cohesion.

Defending values

Cases of instrumentalisation of cultural heritage and the political influence on museums or other cultural institutions should also be taken into account in the research. Culture can also face factors of destabilisation, attacks on cultural heritage can destabilise society and jeopardize security while cultural content can greatly influence public opinion and the imaginaries. The proposals should explore how to deal with polarising narratives and controversial aspects of cultural heritage use. The proposals should propose good practices, policy guidelines, run pilot projects and propose didactic materials to raise awareness on existing challenges, enhance “neutrality” in cultural heritage management, collective responsibility and cultural resilience; explore the notions of care and repair applied to cultural heritage.



Interpreting wine origins in Telavi



Interpreting the city origins in Nessebar



Interpreting Kitchenware, Mytilene

All areas

Requirements common to all proposals

Proposals shall clearly indicate the thematic area they have selected to work on.

Proposals should adopt a **multidisciplinary approach** (involving, for instance and not exhaustively, heritage and museum studies, cultural anthropology, ethnology, media studies, theatre studies, literary studies, musicology etc.) to assess and demonstrate how cultural heritage initiatives contribute to societal well-being, community empowerment, inclusion, and sustainable development while identification of needs for further research in the field should be promoted.

Proposals should prioritize empirical research, participatory methodologies, and policy innovation to maximize and communicate the **transformative power of cultural heritage** across all layers of society. Proposals should connect to both formal and non-formal education, particularly **arts education**. Encouraging collaboration between cultural heritage actors and educational institutions would enhance impact.

Proposals should build on existing knowledge, activities, networks and platforms, notably the ones funded by the EU, for example paying attention to the future digital tools and platforms provided by the **European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage (ECCCH)**, and the Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage. Furthermore, links should be established and complementarities sought with closely related actions, such as relevant R&I actions funded by Horizon Europe or Horizon 2020.

Expected outcome

Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of the societal impact of cultural heritage; Good practices and case studies to enable positive societal impact described and documented, for the context of the research area chosen.
- Capacity building and knowledge dissemination among practitioners and policymakers.
- Produce and disseminate policy recommendations, guidance, and toolkits, supporting policymakers, in the context of the research area chosen as appropriate.

Expected impact

Proposals for topics under this Destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to the following expected impact of the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan:

- The full potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative industries and sectors as drivers of both sustainable innovation and a European sense of belonging is realised through a continuous engagement with society, citizens and economic sectors.

Key Results

Area A: Cultural participation and access

- Good practices for fostering access to cultural heritage, with a focus on young people
- Empowering young people to take an active role in their communities and strengthen social cohesion
- Main barriers to access: geography and rural isolation, under-representation of minority groups, economic disparity
- Effective means to increase cultural participation, with specificities for different groups
- Interdisciplinary and participatory methods to identify models for inclusive cultural participation
- Policy recommendations on digital infrastructure, educational programmes and cross-sector collaboration for inclusive citizenship

Area B: Gender roles and identities

- Relationships between cultural productions, representations and societal attitudes towards different sexes and gender identities
- Representation of gender identities and intersecting factors (racial or ethnic background, disability, socioeconomic background)
- Gender aspects absent or forgotten in supranational cultural narratives
- Actionable recommendations for inclusive and diverse representation, developed with stakeholders

Area C: Cohesion and security

- Cultural heritage as part of shared identities and democratic values
- Links between culture and security, including disinformation and FIMI
- Instrumentalisation of heritage and political influence on museums and cultural institutions
- Dealing with polarising narratives and controversial aspects of heritage use
- Good practices, policy guidelines, pilot projects and didactic materials; care and repair of heritage

Methods and approach

- Multidisciplinary approach: heritage and museum studies, cultural anthropology, ethnology, media, theatre and literary studies, musicology
- Empirical research, participatory methodologies and policy innovation
- Evidence on how heritage initiatives contribute to well-being, community empowerment, inclusion and sustainable development
- Identification of needs for further research in the field
- Links with formal and non-formal education, particularly arts education

Horizontal policies

- Build on existing EU-funded knowledge, activities, networks and platforms
- Use the future digital tools of the ECCCH and the Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage
- Complementarities with related Horizon Europe and Horizon 2020 actions
- Capacity building and dissemination among practitioners and policymakers; policy recommendations, guidance and toolkits

Conditions

Admissibility, page limits and layout Annexes A and E of the Horizon Europe Work Programme General Annexes; page limits in Part B of the Application Form in the Submission System.	**Eligible countries** Annex B of the General Annexes. Some non-EU/non-Associated Countries not automatically eligible have made specific provisions to fund their participants (see the Horizon Europe Programme Guide).
Other eligibility conditions As described in Annex B of the General Annexes.	**Financial and operational capacity** Annex C of the General Annexes, including exclusion criteria.
Award criteria and evaluation To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants are awarded not only in order of ranking but at least also to the highest-ranked proposal within each area (A, B and C), provided it attains all thresholds. Scoring and thresholds in Annex D; submission and evaluation process in Annex F of the General Annexes and the Funding & Tenders Online Manual.	
Legal and financial set-up Lump sum contributions under the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising lump sums in Horizon Europe, and Annex G of the General Annexes. The granting authority may, up to 4 years after the end of the action, object to a transfer of ownership or the exclusive licensing of results (Annex 5).	
Specific conditions As described in the specific topic of the Work Programme.	

Keywords

Anthropology, ethnology | Cultural anthropology | Social structure, inequalities, social mobility, interethnic relations

Tags

Cultural heritage | Cultural studies | Gender | Imaginary | Informal education | Intergenerational | Social representations | Sociology | Youth

Library

Background documents for this call. Select a cover to download the report.



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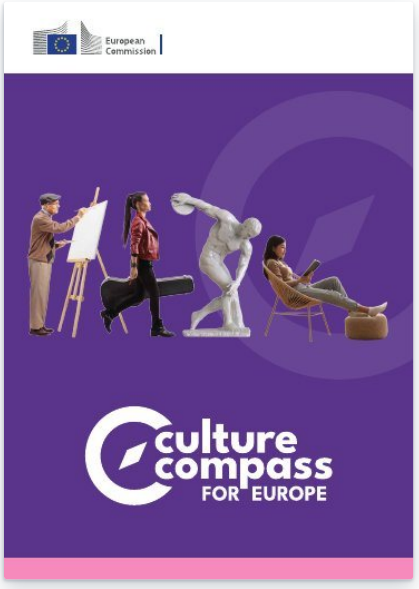
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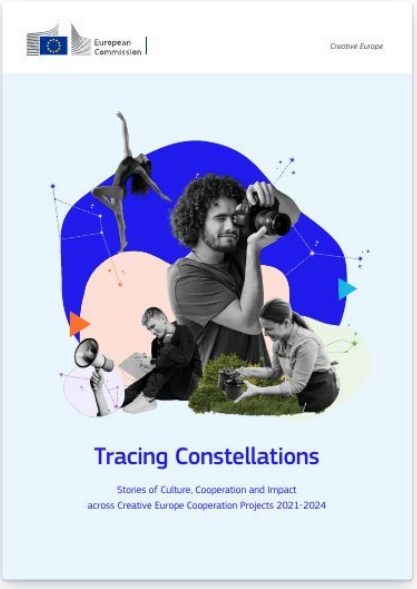
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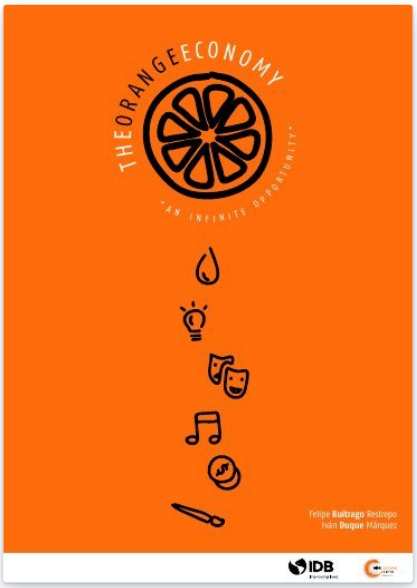
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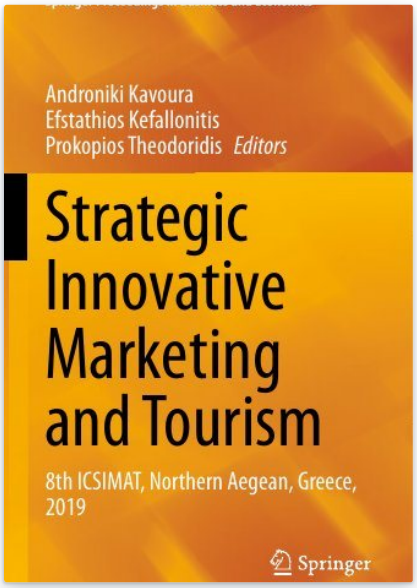
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