HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-08

Safeguarding & transmission of intangible cultural heritage

A Research and Innovation Action on keeping Europe's living heritage alive: the practices, knowledge and skills that communities pass on from generation to generation.

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

Deadline	Topic budget	Per project	Type of action
23 September 2027	**€12 million**	**€3.0–4.0 million**	**RIA**
Single-stage, opens 13 May 2027	About 3 projects funded	Lump sum grant	Research and Innovation Action

Key data

Topic identifier HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-08	**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, 17:00 Brussels time (single-stage)**
Topic budget EUR 12,000,000 (2027), for about 3 grants	**EU contribution per project** EUR 3,000,000 – 4,000,000

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, helping us face the great challenges of our time with confidence.

Cultural heritage originates from the interaction between people and places and is constantly evolving[1]. Every citizen has a right to engage with the heritage of their choice, as part of the right to participate freely in cultural life[2].

Tangible and intangible heritage and the CCIs are strategic assets for social cohesion, resilience and a sense of belonging. They employ more people than the automotive industry and drive innovation across the whole economy, creating jobs especially for young people.

Adopting a people-centred perspective aligned with the Culture Compass for Europe, R&I under this destination will strengthen cultural heritage and the CCIs along the following lines:

The Culture Compass for Europe[3]

The Culture Compass for Europe establishes a vision based on the strengths of European culture: our shared values, our freedoms, our identity. It sets the key directions for EU policymaking on culture and the creative sectors.

"Europe for Culture"

The Compass is transversal and supports culture across strategies, sectors, policies and funding tools by:

- safeguarding the fundamental freedom of artistic expression,
- ensuring everyone's right to create and participate in culture,
- empowering and protecting artists and cultural professionals,
- promoting the cultural sectors to thrive, innovate, and compete globally,
- addressing specific challenges of individual sectors.

"Culture for Europe"

The EU will leverage Europe's rich cultural diversity, cultural heritage and creativity to:

- boost people's well-being,
- strengthen democratic and societal resilience,
- help regions grow and bring communities together,
- drive economic progress and enhance Europe's competitiveness,
- strengthen Europe's global leadership.

Four key directions

1. **A Union that upholds and strengthens European values and cultural rights.**
2. **A Union that empowers artists and cultural professionals and supports people.**
3. **A Union that draws on culture and cultural heritage to become more competitive, resilient and cohesive.**
4. **A Union that champions international cultural relations and partnerships.**

Four overarching tools

Joint Declaration on key principles for cultural policy in Europe | State of Culture report in the EU | EU structured dialogue on Culture | EU Cultural Data Hub

The Joint Declaration links to its text on EUR-Lex; the other three tools are still planned and link to the Commission's timetable of Culture Compass actions.

Investment. The Compass mobilises existing and forthcoming funding instruments at every level, in parallel with private investment and philanthropy: simpler access to EU funding for culture, an updated CulturEU funding guide and EU guidelines on strategic investment in culture.

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)[4]. 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

Living heritage

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) refers to 'the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces' that are 'transmitted from generation to generation' and are 'constantly recreated' – as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH Convention)[5]. ICH is an essential part of a community's identity and is a vital component of its cultural and biological diversity.

The ICH Convention was adopted in 2003, by 148 countries and it recognizes the importance of ICH as a driving force for social cohesion, cultural diversity, and sustainable development.

A heritage that is hard to keep alive

However, the nature of ICH, as living heritage, to continually transform and evolve, makes it particularly challenging to keep alive. Therefore, safeguarding ICH encounters very different challenges than the built heritage sector. ICH is rooted in territories and communities and is essential for identity building and maintaining social cohesion and a harmonious relation to the natural environment. It is a source for creativity and innovation, and a critical factor for new competitive scenarios.

Transmission and intergenerational dialogue

Transmission, education and intergenerational dialogue play a key role in this context, and there is an urgent need to research and foster participatory approaches, especially involving oral cultures and transmission. Different case-studies should explore various approaches to the safeguarding of ICH, considering the specific nature of competences, knowledge and cultural practices of creators and knowledge holders, with a focus on intergenerational transmission.

Rethinking cultural policies

Proposals should contribute to defining the specificities of intangible cultural heritage. Additionally, they could examine and quantify the contribution of ICH to creativity, innovation, cultural and biological diversity, and economic benefits. Proposals should also contribute to the rethinking of cultural policies for the safeguarding of ICH including exploring links and correlations between cultural and biological diversity.

Proposed research projects could address in depth the following research questions:

1. What is the state of play of the safeguarding of ICH in Europe, following the UNESCO 2003 Convention?
2. What are the main threats and challenges to the erosion and loss of ICH in Europe?
3. What are the most effective strategies for securing ICH safeguarding initiatives?
4. How can advanced digital technologies be leveraged for the safeguarding & transmission of ICH?
5. How can ICH provide inspiration for innovative approaches to existing societal challenges (e.g. competitiveness, intergenerational dialogue democratic values, biodiversity protection and restoration[6])
6. What role can community-led initiatives play in safeguarding ICH, and how can communities be supported and empowered to safeguard it?

All proposals

Requirements common to all proposals

The role of **advanced digital technologies** to support ICH safeguarding and transmission should be considered, as appropriately.

The proposals should comprise **transdisciplinary scientific collaborations** involving, for instance and not exhaustive, heritage and museum studies, cultural anthropology, ethnology, media studies, theatre studies, literary studies, musicology etc. Available results of existing research on intangible cultural heritage should be taken into consideration, while identification of needs for further research in the field should be promoted.

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. In particular, proposals should establish links to, and where appropriate build on findings from, projects funded under the topics **HORIZON-CL2-2025-HERITAGE-02: Innovative approaches to intangible cultural heritage for societal resilience**.

Expected outcome

Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of the state of play of the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), in the Context set by the 2003 UNESCO Convention, and an overview of successful methods for documenting and ensuring the transmission of ICH, including digital, audio-visual, and advanced technologies.
- Recognition of the significance and value of ICH in different social, cultural and economic contexts, and with attention to biodiversity preservation and links between ICH and the natural environment.
- Empowered communities take ownership and responsibility for safeguarding their ICH, with a focus on how inter-generational transmission is ensured, and on youth involvement and informal education.
- Innovative policy solutions are available, for the safeguarding of ICH and for mobilising ICH as a resource for fostering social and economic innovation, biodiversity protection and restoration.

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 Reference

The Faro Convention

Council of Europe Treaty Series – No. 199 · Faro, 27 October 2005

Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society[2]

The Faro Convention puts people and human values at the centre of an enlarged and cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage. It recognises that rights relating to cultural heritage are inherent in the right to participate in cultural life, and it recognises individual and collective responsibility towards cultural heritage.

Download the Convention (PDF) · CETS 199 on coe.int

Two key definitions (Article 2)

Cultural heritage

"a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time;"

Heritage community

"consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations."

Rights and responsibilities (Article 4)

- Everyone, alone or collectively, has the right to benefit from the cultural heritage and to contribute towards its enrichment.
- Everyone, alone or collectively, has the responsibility to respect the cultural heritage of others as much as their own heritage, and consequently the common heritage of Europe.

Faro and the themes of this call

Articles of the Convention that speak directly to the expected outcomes and scope of HERITAGE-08:

TRANSMISSION AND EDUCATION

Article 7 (d)
Cultural heritage and dialogue

"...integrate these approaches into all aspects of lifelong education and training."

CULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Article 8 (b)
Environment, heritage and quality of life

"...promote an integrated approach to policies concerning cultural, biological, geological and landscape diversity to achieve a balance between these elements;"

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION

Article 9 (d)
Sustainable use of the cultural heritage

"...promote the use of materials, techniques and skills based on tradition, and explore their potential for contemporary applications;"

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Article 12 (b)
Access to cultural heritage and democratic participation

"...take into consideration the value attached by each heritage community to the cultural heritage with which it identifies;"

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Article 12 (d)
Access to cultural heritage and democratic participation

"...take steps to improve access to the heritage, especially among young people and the disadvantaged, in order to raise awareness about its value, the need to maintain and preserve it, and the benefits which may be derived from it."

TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Article 13 (c)
Cultural heritage and knowledge

"...encourage interdisciplinary research on cultural heritage, heritage communities, the environment and their inter-relationship;"

ADVANCED DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Article 14
Cultural heritage and the information society

"...develop the use of digital technology to enhance access to cultural heritage and the benefits which derive from it"

Faro's "heritage communities" and the UNESCO 2003 Convention[5] meet on the same ground: intangible cultural heritage is what "communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage", transmitted from generation to generation.

Capitalization

HERITAGE-08 asks proposals to build on existing knowledge, activities, networks and platforms, notably those funded by the EU. Two European digital infrastructures are named in the topic: the European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage (ECCCH) and the Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage.

THE DIFFERENCE IN A NUTSHELL

The Data Space is where Europe's digitised heritage is *shared, accessed and reused*. The ECCCH is where heritage professionals and researchers *work on that heritage together*, with advanced tools for digital twins.

	ECCCH	Data Space
What it is	A collaborative digital infrastructure and workspace for cultural heritage research and innovation	A data-sharing infrastructure and community for digitised cultural heritage, accessible through Europeana
Main purpose	Working with digital objects and "digital twins": digitisation, analysis, documentation, conservation and joint research	Opening up access to heritage data and enabling its reuse across sectors
Main users	Heritage institutions, research organisations and professionals	Data providers (institutions and aggregators) and reusers: creatives, educators, researchers, innovators and citizens
EU funding	Horizon Europe (research and innovation calls, 2023–2025)	Digital Europe programme
Run by	Built by Horizon Europe projects, with ECHOES designing its architecture and governance	A consortium led by the Europeana Foundation, since September 2022
Roots	New initiative, first call under Work Programme 2023	The Europeana Initiative, since 2008, and Recommendation (EU) 2021/1970

The two are complementary: the ECCCH joins forces with the Data Space, the European Open Science Cloud and research infrastructures such as CLARIN, DARIAH and E-RIHS. A HERITAGE-08 project can use the ECCCH to document and study intangible heritage, and the Data Space to share the results for wide reuse.

European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage (ECCCH)



Funded under Horizon Europe, the Cultural Heritage Cloud – or "European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage" (ECCCH) – is an initiative for the creation of a digital infrastructure that will serve cultural heritage institutions and professionals across the EU, facilitating their collaboration[7].

Joins forces with

Common European data space for cultural heritage

The goal is to help cultural heritage institutions, research organisations and other professionals of all sizes and types to work with their digital objects – virtual replicas of their heritage objects, also known as **"digital twins"** – in a more interconnected, harmonised and informed way, allowing them to navigate the digital transition and conduct research together.

European Open Science Cloud | CLARIN | DARIAH | E-RIHS

Building the Cloud, call by call

2023
EUR 35 million

ECHOES designs and implements the basic architecture, data model and governance of the Cloud. **AUTOMATA** (archaeological ceramics and lithics), **TEXTaiLES** (textile objects, non-destructive methods) and **HERITALISE** (heritage buildings and diverse objects) develop digitisation tools for its users.

2024
EUR 48 million

Research and development of basic tools that make the platform practical and user friendly: **ten new projects** in five domains.

2025
EUR 26 million

Developing and testing real-world use cases of the platform together with stakeholders. The call closed on 16 September 2025.

Five domains of the 2024 tools

1 Dynamic processes, objects and combined data

Digitising dynamic objects, processes and practices and monitoring heritage over time.

KINETIKA 4D digital twins of objects with mechanical parts

2 Advanced data enrichment

Annotated bibliographies and documentation of fieldwork and collection processes.

INFINITY metadata enrichment and AI tools

MusicSphere digital replicas of traditional wind instruments such as pipe organs ICH

ECHOLOT interoperable, reusable heritage data

3 Documenting, interlinking and organising data

Metadata enrichment, rights and multi-actor value chains.

ARXIVE annotating evolving digital twins of tangible and intangible assets ICH

StratiGraph knowledge graphs and 3D field documentation

4 High-value interactions with visitors

Creating, sharing and re-using interactive content.

UNICHE co-designed platform for interactive heritage experiences

PlaceMUS XR "places of music", tangible and intangible heritages in XR ICH

5 Study, conservation and restoration

Supporting the study of heritage objects and their conservation through digital twins.

EXCALIBUR burial sites, artefacts, traditions and ceremonies

COLOURS colour analysis and restoration tools

HERITAGE-08 asks proposals to pay attention to the future digital tools and platforms of the ECCCH. Projects marked ICH already work with intangible heritage.

Learn more: The Cultural Heritage Cloud[4] · Contact: RTD-CULTURAL-HERITAGE-CLOUD@ec.europa.eu

Common European Data Spaces

"Common European Data Spaces will make more data available for access and reuse" in a trustworthy and secure environment[8].

Set out by the European strategy for data (February 2020), the data spaces are sector-based environments built on shared data infrastructures and governance frameworks for pooling, accessing and sharing data. They are open to all organisations and individuals, and data holders stay in control of their data. Over time they will interconnect to form a single market for data.

Fourteen sectors and domains

The highlighted data spaces are the closest to intangible cultural heritage research. Cultural Heritage and Research and Innovation (EOSC) are covered in their own sections on this page.

Agriculture · **Cultural Heritage** · Energy · Finance · Green deal · Health · **Language** · Manufacturing · **Media** · Mobility · Public administration · **Research and Innovation** · Skills · **Tourism**

Shared principles

- A secure, privacy-preserving infrastructure to pool, access, share, process and use data.
- Access rules that are "fair, transparent, proportionate, and non-discriminatory", supported by data governance mechanisms.
- Respect for EU rules and values, including personal data protection, consumer protection and competition law.
- Data holders can grant access to or share personal or non-personal data, for free or against compensation.

Building blocks

Data Spaces Support Centre

Supports the sectoral initiatives; funded under Digital Europe and Horizon Europe.

Simpl

Smart open-source middleware platform for data spaces, funded under Digital Europe.

Data Governance Act

Frameworks for data altruism organisations and data intermediary services, with guidelines from the European Data Innovation Board.

Common European Data Spaces · Data Union Strategy (Nov 2025) · State of play (2024)

The Destination asks actions to leverage data from relevant European Data Spaces. Beyond cultural heritage, the language, media and tourism data spaces can feed HERITAGE-08 research on oral traditions, audiovisual archives and living heritage in its places.

Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage

A European Union flagship to accelerate the digital transformation of the cultural heritage sector.

The data space is funded by the Digital Europe programme and has been operated since September 2022 by a consortium led by the Europeana Foundation, under a service contract with the European Commission. It builds on the Europeana Initiative, supported by the Commission and the Member States since 2008, and on the Commission Recommendation (EU) 2021/1970 on a common European data space for cultural heritage[9].

58 million+	3,500+	4,500+
items	data providers	network members

dataspace-culturalheritage.eu · Europeana.eu · Recommendation (EU) 2021/1970

Vision 2025–2030

A common European data space for cultural heritage that

- continues to open up and democratise access to cultural heritage
- improves the flow of data to support value creation, innovation and competitiveness in Europe
- adapts to the needs of participants and technological developments
- engages a diverse community and serves the digital transformation of the sector with a trusted governance model and attention to ethical considerations and human-centred digital practices.

Three core priorities

1
Provide a robust, interoperable data space infrastructure while increasing the diversity and quality of data.

2
Facilitate access to cultural heritage data and enable its reuse across sectors.

3
Support the digital transformation of the cultural heritage sector through capacity building, networking and innovation.

Cross-cutting themes

Artificial Intelligence

Leveraging the potential of AI for cultural heritage data and applications and, vice versa, the potential of cultural heritage data for the European AI economy.

3D and extended reality

3D digitisation is key for preserving and restoring Europe's cultural heritage in case of damage and, together with XR, for immersive applications that bring it to life.

Multilingualism

Upholding Europe's cultural and linguistic diversity and enabling access to all elements of the data space in everyone's own language.

FAIR

Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable

CARE

Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics

The data space strategy requires both FAIR and CARE data principles to be observed. CARE matters especially for intangible heritage, where the data belongs to living communities and knowledge holders.

> **HERITAGE-08 asks proposals to build on existing EU-funded platforms, paying attention to the future digital tools of the ECCCH and the Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage.**

European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)



EOSC gives researchers in Europe "an open and trusted multi-disciplinary environment where they can publish, find and reuse data, tools and services": a web of FAIR data and services for science[10].

It is meant to serve as the common European research and innovation data space, alongside other sectoral data spaces such as the Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage, and it is a priority action of the European Research Area policy agenda.

What EOSC aims to do

- Speed up open science, raise research productivity and improve reproducibility and trust in science.
- Pool and align resources across Europe.
- Make data and other digital objects, such as software and publications, machine-actionable and linked with tools and services.
- Follow the FAIR principles: data that are Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable.

Tripartite governance

European Commission

Represents the EU and implements EOSC through the EOSC European co-programmed partnership, guided by a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) developed with the community.

EOSC Steering Board

EU Member States and countries associated to Horizon Europe; advises the Commission and helps monitor EOSC's development.

EOSC Association

An international non-profit association under Belgian law, giving the stakeholder community a single voice.

A federation of nodes

EOSC is being built as “a federated system of systems for sharing of research data and digital resources across Europe”. Data repositories, research infrastructures, e-infrastructures and other service providers join it as nodes.

Oct 2024
The **EOSC EU Node**, procured by the Commission, is launched as the first and reference node of the federation.

Apr 2026
Fourteen new candidate nodes are announced to strengthen the EOSC Federation.

Jul 2026
28 EOSC Nodes and **34 Horizon Europe EOSC projects** meet to review progress.

EOSC EU Node · Building the EOSC Federation · SRIA (2024) · EOSC on the Commission website

> **The Destination asks actions that need or generate data to leverage the data and services of European Research Infrastructures federated under EOSC, and the ECCCH joins forces with EOSC. For HERITAGE-08, EOSC is the route to make research data on intangible heritage FAIR and reusable across disciplines.**

ESFRI Roadmap 2026

The European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) maintains a European Roadmap for new or major-upgrade research infrastructures of pan-European interest, with a 10–20 year horizon[11].

First published in 2006 with 35 projects, the Roadmap was updated in 2008, 2010, 2016, 2018 and 2021, bringing the number of research infrastructures of pan-European relevance to 63. Their progress is followed through ESFRI-MOS, the central online platform for information on ESFRI Projects and ESFRI Landmarks.

The 2026 update

Oct 2024
ESFRI launches the **Roadmap 2026** process, open to proposals for new research infrastructure projects and major upgrades.

2025–26
Evaluation over one and a half years by the Strategy Working Groups and the Implementation Group, with **more than 80 experts**.

Jun 2026
The 96th ESFRI plenary in Nicosia selects **six new proposals** for the Roadmap 2026[12].

FOREST Fiber-based Optical netwoRk for European Science and Technology

IN-SYLVA Europe Forest ecosystem adaptation to global changes

JERICO-RI Coastal observation

MEDem Monitoring Electoral Democracy

Microscopy Europe Advanced electron microscopy for materials

NFFA2050 NANO Foundries and Fine Analysis

Social and Cultural Innovation infrastructures

The research infrastructures of the Social and Cultural Innovation domain in the current Roadmap (2021). Those most relevant to intangible heritage are highlighted.

ESFRI Projects

- **E-RIHS** — Heritage Science
- EHRI — Holocaust research
- GGP — Generations and Gender
- GUIDE — EuroCohort
- OPERAS — Open scholarly communication in SSH
- RESILIENCE — Religious studies

ESFRI Landmarks

- CESSDA ERIC — Social science data
- **CLARIN ERIC** — Language resources
- **DARIAH ERIC** — Digital arts and humanities
- ESS ERIC — European Social Survey
- SHARE ERIC — Health, ageing and retirement

E-RIHS supports research on heritage interpretation, preservation, documentation and management; CLARIN, DARIAH and E-RIHS are also the infrastructures the ECCCH joins forces with.

National Roadmaps

The European Commission and ESFRI urge Member States and Associated Countries to develop national research infrastructure roadmaps, "vital blueprints which enable countries to set national priorities", aligned with regional smart specialisation strategies as a precondition for using the European Structural and Investment Funds. ESFRI lists the national roadmaps of 36 countries:

Austria · Belgium · Bulgaria · Canada · Croatia · Cyprus · Czech Republic · Denmark · Estonia · Finland · France · Germany · Greece · Hungary · Iceland · Ireland · Italy · Latvia · Lithuania · Luxembourg · Malta · Montenegro · North Macedonia · Norway · Poland · Portugal · Romania · Serbia · Slovak Republic · Slovenia · Spain · Sweden · Switzerland · The Netherlands · Turkey · United Kingdom

Open the National Roadmaps on esfri.eu · ESFRI Roadmap

The Destination asks actions to leverage the data and services of research infrastructures included in ESFRI and the ESFRI roadmap. HERITAGE-08 projects can draw on E-RIHS, DARIAH and CLARIN, and check their own country's national roadmap for partners and facilities.

Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs)

One of the 14 industrial ecosystems of the EU Industrial Strategy[13].

CCIs on the Commission website · Monitor of industrial ecosystems · Needs and challenges (2024 survey)

Scope and Sub-sectors

The EU defines the CCI ecosystem broadly to include:[13,14]

- Architecture
- Archives, libraries, and museums
- **Artistic crafts**
- Audiovisual (film, television, video games, multimedia, radio)
- **Tangible and intangible cultural heritage**
- Design (including fashion design)
- **Music, performing arts (theatre, dance), and festivals**
- Literature, books, and publishing
- Visual arts

Highlighted: the sub-sectors where intangible cultural heritage lives and is transmitted.

Key Economic and Employment Impact

~3.95%
Economic Value
The CCI ecosystem accounts for approximately 3.95% of EU value added (roughly €477 billion).[14]

~8 million
Employment
The sector employs around 8 million people (with some estimates citing up to 8.7 million), comparable in size to the agricultural sector.[15,14]

99.9%+
Enterprise Structure
Comprises over 1.2 to 2 million cultural enterprises, where over 99.9% are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), micro-enterprises, or start-ups.[16,17,14,15]

Spill-overs
Cross-Sector Spill-overs
CCIs act as innovation catalysts, driving growth in tech, tourism, urban regeneration, and sustainability goals under the EU Green Deal.[13]

EU support for creative entrepreneurs

InvestEU – Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Fund
Managed by the European Investment Fund: "a capped portfolio guarantee for loans to creative enterprises", aimed at micro-businesses and SMEs.

WORTH Partnership Project
Supports design-driven business ideas in lifestyle industries with an incubation programme worth about €60,000, plus €10,000 to 20,000 in financial support.

Pact for Skills – CCI partnership
Large-scale skills partnership launched in April 2022, bringing together over 100 stakeholders from the CCI ecosystem.

Euroclusters and the Cluster Collaboration Platform
EU cluster initiatives, two of the Euroclusters dedicated to the CCIs.

European Digital Innovation Hubs
Support for digital transformation, searchable by sector, including the cultural and creative economy.

Enterprise Europe Network
Helps SMEs grow internationally.

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs
Cross-border exchanges between new and experienced entrepreneurs.

Intellectual property
Copyright, patents, trademarks and design protection are central to the creative economy.

Culture funding opportunities (CulturEU) · Horizon Europe: cultural heritage and CCIs · Infographic: EU solutions for creative entrepreneurs

Core EU Policies and Frameworks

Creative Europe Programme (2021–2027)

The flagship EU funding program with a budget of **€2.4 billion**, divided into the Culture strand, the MEDIA strand (audiovisual/film/games), and a Cross-sectoral strand. You can explore open calls via the Ministry of Culture Creative Europe Page.[18,19]

Culture Compass for Europe

A strategic framework aiming to embed culture deeply into the EU's political, social, and economic strategies.[20,21]

Culture Moves Europe

An EU-funded individual mobility and residency scheme implemented via the Goethe-Institut to support artists and cultural professionals.[22,21]

EIT Culture & Creativity

An institutional partnership supporting creative tech start-ups, scale-ups, and regional hubs across Europe.[23]

European Capitals of Culture

An initiative highlighting Europe's cultural richness (featuring cities like Oulu and Trenčín).[24]

Key Challenges

Fragmentation & Scale-up 1

The sector is heavily fragmented, making it difficult for small entities to scale up internationally.

Access to Finance 2

Traditional banking and investment ecosystems often misalign with the intangible assets and risk profiles of micro-creatives.

Transitions 3

The industry faces simultaneous pressures from digital transformation (AI, streaming, piracy) and the green/climate transition.

Sources:[25,17,16,20,19]

Skills for industry

“Skills are at the heart of our industrial policy.”[26]

The digital and green transitions open skills gaps that could slow industrial investment, so the EU invests in training, upskilling and reskilling.

European skills agenda

A five-year plan adopted in July 2020, with quantitative objectives for 2025.

Pact for Skills

Launched on 10 November 2020. Its large-scale skills partnership for the CCI ecosystem, launched in April 2022, brings together over 100 stakeholders.

Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills

A strategic approach to upskilling a specific sector. **Cultural heritage** was one of the 2021 focus areas.

Digital and green skills

A taxonomy of green-transition skills, a European competence framework on climate and sustainability, and the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition.

Entrepreneurial and leadership skills

Support for transversal and entrepreneurial skills, especially for people combining technical, business and leadership abilities.

For HERITAGE-08, the transmission of intangible heritage is itself a question of skills: the knowledge of craftspeople, musicians and performers passed between generations, through formal, informal and vocational learning.

For official updates, strategies, and funding databases, visit the EU Culture and Creativity Portal.[20,21]

HERITAGE-08 invites proposals to examine and quantify the contribution of ICH to creativity, innovation and economic benefits. Craftspeople, musicians, performers and festival organisers are both knowledge holders of intangible heritage and part of the CCI ecosystem, so these EU tools can help carry research results into living practice.

Key Results

State of play and documentation

- State of play of ICH safeguarding in Europe, following the UNESCO 2003 Convention
- Overview of successful methods for documenting and transmitting ICH, including digital, audio-visual and advanced technologies
- Main threats and challenges leading to the erosion and loss of ICH in Europe
- Defining the specificities of intangible cultural heritage
- Most effective strategies for securing ICH safeguarding initiatives

Value, nature and biodiversity

- Recognition of the significance and value of ICH in different social, cultural and economic contexts
- Contribution of ICH to creativity, innovation, cultural and biological diversity and economic benefits examined and quantified
- Links and correlations between cultural and biological diversity, and between ICH and the natural environment
- ICH as a resource for biodiversity protection and restoration

Communities and transmission

- Communities empowered to take ownership and responsibility for safeguarding their ICH
- Inter-generational transmission, youth involvement and informal education
- Participatory approaches, especially involving oral cultures and transmission
- Case studies on the competences, knowledge and cultural practices of creators and knowledge holders
- Role and support of community-led safeguarding initiatives

Methods and approach

- Transdisciplinary collaboration: heritage and museum studies, cultural anthropology, ethnology, media, theatre and literary studies, musicology
- Case studies exploring different approaches to safeguarding ICH
- Advanced digital technologies for the safeguarding and transmission of ICH
- Build on available research results and identify needs for further research

Policy and synergies

- Innovative policy solutions for safeguarding ICH and mobilising it for social and economic innovation
- Rethinking cultural policies for the safeguarding of ICH
- Use the future digital tools of the ECCCH and the Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage
- Links to projects under HORIZON-CL2-2025-HERITAGE-02 and related Horizon Europe and Horizon 2020 actions

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

Scoring and thresholds in Annex D; submission and evaluation process and indicative timeline 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. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties, in the form of grants only, up to EUR 60 000 per third party. 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 | Ethnography

Tags

Biodiversity | Cultural anthropology | Cultural diversity | Culture and nature | Environmental humanities | Ethnology | Intangible heritage | Traditional knowledge

Synergetic concepts

UNESCO 2003 Convention | Faro Convention | Heritage communities | Culture Compass for Europe | Common European Data Spaces | Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage | Europeana | European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage (ECCCH) | Digital twins | European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) | FAIR and CARE principles | ESFRI Roadmap | National Roadmaps | E-RIHS | DARIAH | CLARIN | Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) | Creative Europe | Culture Moves Europe | EIT Culture & Creativity | European Capitals of Culture | InvestEU – Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Fund | WORTH Partnership | European Digital Innovation Hubs | Euroclusters | Pact for Skills | Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills | Nature Restoration Regulation | HORIZON-CL2-2025-HERITAGE-02

Library

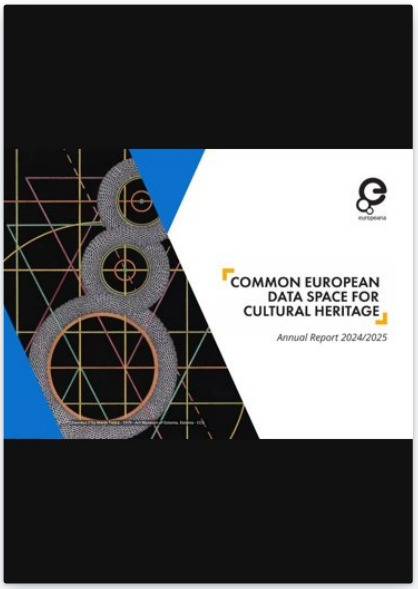
Background documents for this call. Select a cover to download the report.



Download 299 KB



Download 4.4 MB



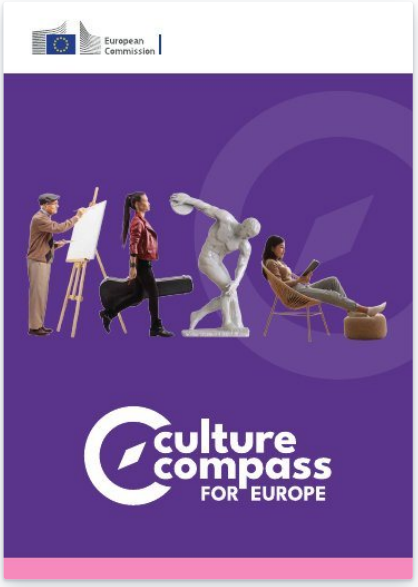
Download 11.4 MB



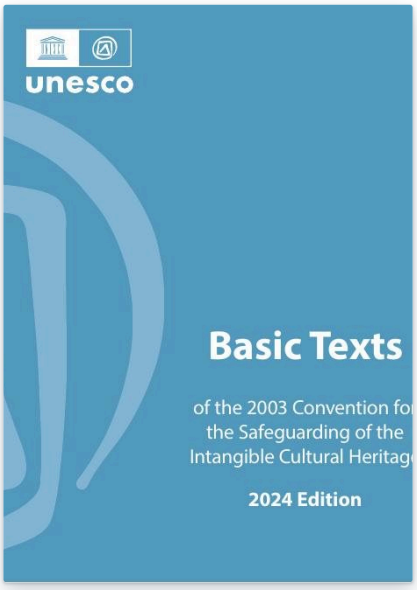
Download 5.1 MB



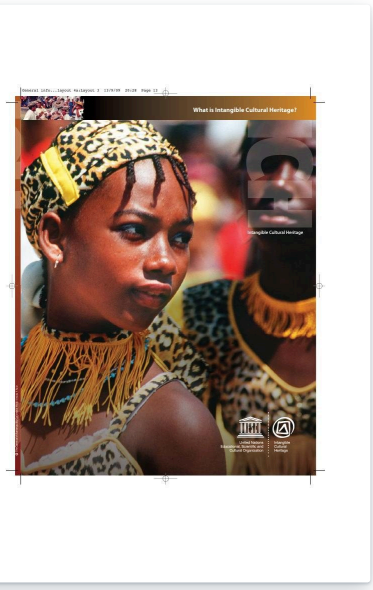
Download 1008 KB



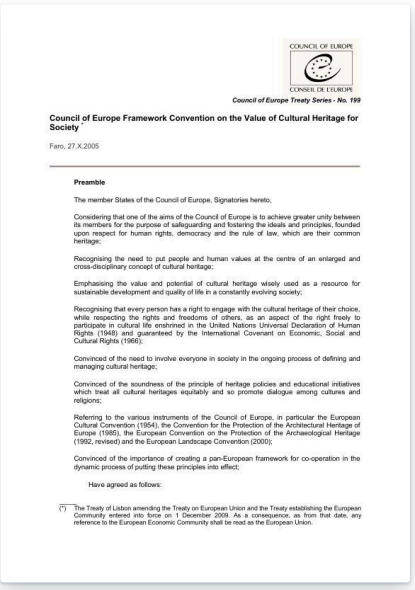
Download 1.0 MB



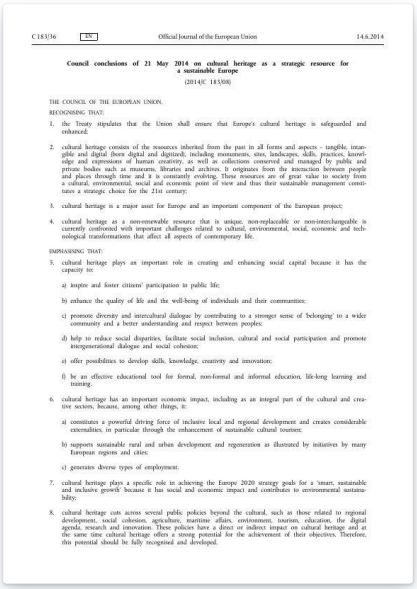
Download 1.5 MB



Download 1.9 MB



Download 130 KB



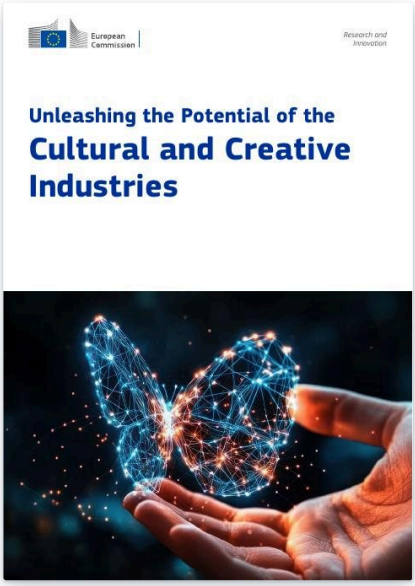
Download 276 KB



Download 1.4 MB



Download 336 KB



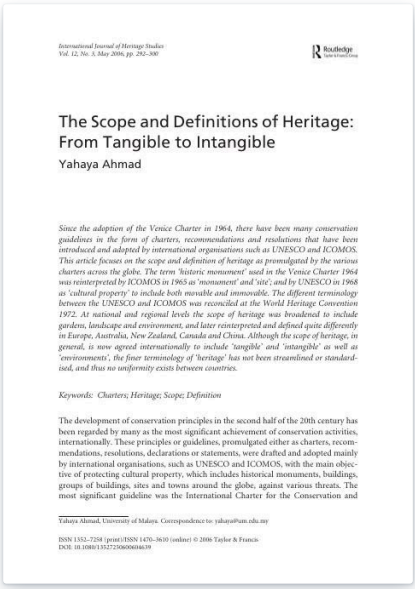
Download 1.8 MB



Download 3.3 MB



Download 35 KB



Download 52 KB

References

1 Council conclusions of 21 May 2014 on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe (2014/C 183/08). eur-lex.europa.eu – CELEX:52014XG0614(08)

2 CETS 199 – Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention). coe.int – CETS 199

3 European Commission, *Communication on a Culture Compass for Europe*, COM(2025) 785. eur-lex.europa.eu – CELEX:52025DC0785; see also culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/culture-compass

4 European Commission, *Cultural heritage cloud*. research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu – Cultural heritage cloud

5 UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, Paris, 2003. ich.unesco.org/en/convention

6 As defined in the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. environment.ec.europa.eu – Nature Restoration Regulation

7 European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *The Cultural Heritage Cloud – Advancing with new tools*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2026, data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/3302898

8 European Commission, *Common European Data Spaces*, Shaping Europe's digital future. digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-spaces

9 European Commission: Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, *Common European data space for cultural heritage – Strategy 2025-2030*, 2025, data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/9497280

10 European Commission, *European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)*, Research and innovation – Open science. research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu – European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)

11 European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), *ESFRI Roadmap*. esfri.eu/esfri-roadmap; *National Roadmaps*, esfri.eu/national-roadmaps

12 ERA Portal Austria, *Six new project proposals selected for inclusion in the ESFRI Roadmap 2026*, 29 June 2026. community.era.gv.at – ESFRI Roadmap 2026

13 European Commission, *Cultural and creative industries*, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs. single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu – Cultural and creative industries

14 Schmerber, L., *Cultural and Creative Industries – A Policy Brief from the Policy Learning Platform for a smarter Europe*, Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform, January 2024. interregeurope.eu – Policy brief on Cultural and Creative Industries (PDF)

15 Video on the cultural and creative industries, YouTube. youtube.com/watch?v=8SELDFQDTA0

16 European Commission, *Cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries (CCIs)*, Research and innovation. research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu – Cultural heritage and CCIs

17 Horizon Europe France, *Cultural and creative industries for a sustainable climate transition*. horizon-europe.gouv.fr – Cultural and creative industries for a sustainable climate transition

18 Welcomeurope, *Creative Europe*. welcomeurope.com – Creative Europe

19 Hellenic Ministry of Culture, *Creative Europe*. culture.gov.gr – Creative Europe

20 European Commission, *Cultural and creative sectors*, Culture and Creativity. culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-and-creative-sectors

21 European Commission, *Culture and Creativity* portal. culture.ec.europa.eu

22 Video on Culture Moves Europe, YouTube. youtube.com/watch?v=KxDF63S-WWY

23 EIT Culture & Creativity. eit-culture-creativity.eu

24 European Commission, *Two European Capitals of Culture in 2026*, Culture and Creativity. culture.ec.europa.eu – Two European Capitals of Culture in 2026

25 OECD, *Review of the cultural and creative sectors in the EU* (flyer). oecd.org – OECD review of CCS in the EU (PDF)

26 European Commission, *Skills for industry*, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs. single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu – Skills for industry

27 European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *Driving a green, digital and innovative European cultural heritage – EU-funded research and innovation projects from the 2024 call for proposals of Horizon Europe's cluster 2 "Culture, creativity and inclusive society"*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2026, data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/7071497

28 European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Culture Compass for Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2026, data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/6314060

29 UNESCO, *Basic Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2024 Edition, Living Heritage Entity, Culture Sector, UNESCO, Paris, 2024. ich.unesco.org – Basic Texts

30 European Commission: Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, *Common European data space for cultural heritage – Annual Report 2024/2025*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/7414295

31 European Commission: Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, *The future of Europe's past – Why Member States must do more to advance digitisation of our cultural heritage. Implementation of the 2021 Commission Recommendation on a common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage, Progress Report 2021-2023*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/6974290

32 European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *R&I Facts & Figures: Cultural and Creative Industries*, Publications Office of the European Union, July 2026, data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/6632547

33 European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *Unleashing the Potential of the Cultural and Creative Industries*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/0306127

34 Izsak, K., Moreno, C. and Vuijlsteke, C., *Monitoring industrial ecosystems – Cultural and creative industries: Analytical report, 2024 edition*, European Commission, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs and European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, data.europa.eu/doi/10.2826/5020731

35 Pinna, G., 'Intangible Heritage and Museums', *ICOM News*, no. 4, 2003 (Focus: International Museum Day 2004, "Museums and Intangible Heritage").

36 Ahmad, Y., 'The Scope and Definitions of Heritage: From Tangible to Intangible', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2006, pp. 292–300, doi.org/10.1080/13527250600604639

37 UNESCO, *What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?*, Intangible Cultural Heritage information kit, UNESCO, Paris, c. 2009.

PREPARED BY

Dorothea Papathanasiou-Zuhrt

B.A., M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D.

dorothea@cultinvestneteu.com