European Heritage Hub

Connecting Civil Society for Heritage

8 - 9 April 2024, Athens Conference







European Heritage Hub



Co-funded by the European Union

DAY ONE

8 April 2024, Getting to know the Cultural heritage Organisations

MODERATION

Amalia Zepou, Project manager of the Europa Nostra Heritage Hub in Athens, opened the event by welcoming partners and participants on behalf of Europa Nostra and Elliniki Etairia. She thanked those who had travelled to be here and explained the context and the goals of the conference. In particular, the opportunity to get to know each other's project and make the best out of the offline event to explore new relationships and possible collaborations in the future. In-between sessions she wrapped up and reminded the direction of the day and the overall objectives.



WELCOME SPEECHES

Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic, Secretary General of Europa Nostra and Leader of the European Heritage Hub, welcomed everyone by highlighting that, "We are 11 countries represented from the region" and explained that. the three pillars of the European Heritage Hub of Green, Social and Digital, as well as Elliniki Etairia's theme of Education/Youth will form the basis of the event. Sneška stated that gathering together in Athens is significant because Athens is the symbol of democracy for Europe and, in the light of the upcoming EU Elections, this is important because, "Democracy is currently the most threatened heritage in Europe". This gives even more reason for coming together, to demonstrate to European decision-makers that cultural heritage matters especially in preserving and strengthening democracy and human rights. The objective of the event is to learn about the common challenges and priorities shared in the region and to create bilateral cooperation between heritage actors. Sneška also emphasised that as the heritage spokesperson for Europe, "It is important to get your feedback on where we can do better, such as cultural and history education". A strong statement targeting the European Institutions should result from this event.



Lydia Carras, Founder of Elliniki Etairia - Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage, in turn warmly welcomed everyone to Athens, thanking the Board, Amalia Zepou and Stavroula Thravalou for organising this event. She mentioned the long term relationship between Elliniki Etairia and Europa Nostra and of the commitment to heritage. The importance of being neighbours and the timeliness of having a new chapter to learn from the past, yet move forward was stated, "Let us share our common heritage and build on this. It is important to listen to each other. I am looking forward to two creative days". Lydia Carras also introduced board members of the Strategy team of the Europa Nostra Heritage Hub in Athens present in the audience: Alexandra Prokopiou, Marina Martinou, Kostas Stamatopoulos, Eleni Maistrou and Ioanna Mikrou.



Stefan Zotti, Team leader, DG Education and Culture, European Commission, shared his gratitude for this event taking place, stressing that heritage is important as a vehicle of European identity and democracy. He also highlighted the importance of the Athens Hub to get concrete ideas to create new ecosystems of heritage on the ground. He stated "We are missing concrete actions on the ground to illustrate policy, therefore we strongly rely on the approach and potential of the regional Hubs". He thanked the organisers and said he looked forward to receiving the results from the event.



EUROPEAN HERITAGE HUB: TOOLS & OPPORTUNITIES OF THE PILOT PROJECT

Manon Richard, Project manager of the European Heritage Hub pilot project, provided an overview of the project including its time frame (May 2023-April 2025), the 20 partners led by Europa Nostra and its geographical coverage across Europe including the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and the Caucasus that are distributed between 4 separate hubs (Krakow, Lisbon, Nicosia and Athens). She presented the way in which the platform is developing, aiming at going beyond the end of the current project to establish a permanent knowledge, policy and networking hub for the future.

She briefly mentioned the vision of the European Heritage Hub to promote Heritage as a lever for the triple transformation, aligning all of its activities with the Green, Social and Digital transition goals of our society. She presented the outcome of the Venice Hub Forum during which the "Global Call to put Culture at the heart of Climate Action" was initiated and finally presented in Dubai at the COP28, where the "Group of Friends for Culture-based Climate Action" was launched during a Ministerial meeting.

Tools developed for the Hub community include a heritage library, a policy monitor, a social forum and calls that aim at seed-funding heritage projects across the countries of South Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and the Caucasus. Particularly, Mrs. Richard highlighted the success of the recently launched Small Grants Scheme - with the support of the ALIPH Foundation - that attracted more than 600 applications. She finally mentioned that more offline connecting events like the one in Athens will take place soon, in cities of the above countries, and encouraged everyone to visit the website and join the network.



EUROPA NOSTRA HERITAGE HUB IN ATHENS

Stavroula Thravalou, project coordinator, presented the way the regional hub of Europa Nostra based in Athens is developing. First mentioned were the countries included in its regional coverage: Greece and 10 other countries of South-Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, namely, Albania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Turkey, Armenia and Georgia. Second, Mrs Thravalou presented the goals the EN Athens Hub has set for itself such as to expand the network of heritage actors in the region, encourage cross-border meetings and connections, and strengthen the active involvement of young people in the Hub. Last, she illustrated past events organised by the Athens Heritage Hub such as the Prespes youth camp in Northern Greece and country visits in Armenia and Bulgaria.



*The diverse heritage projects implemented in the 11 countries meet the objectives of the European Heritage Hub and share a number of common challenges and priorities

CHALLENGES & PRIORITIES of CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS in SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE AND THE CAUCASUS

The diverse heritage projects implemented in the 11 countries, addressing the European Heritage Hub goals of contributing to the transformation, share a number of common challenges and priorities:

GREEN PANEL moderated by Ioanna Mikrou					
Country	Presenter	Organisation	Project	Challenges	Priorities
Serbia	Vesna Marjanovic	Europa Nostra Serbia	Belgrade Heritage Forum, Watermills in Bistrica	Destruction of built heritage in Belgrade, Lack of regulatory framework for land uses & built heritage conservation	Improvements of legal framework & policy for the protection of cultural heritage
Greece	George Sachinis	Urban Dig project	Adrianio Aqueduct in Athens	Lack of lasting integrated and inclusive approaches	Climate change adaptation & mitigation
Bulgaria	Slavka Bozukova	Cultural Heritage Society	Crossborder footpath Madan- Rudozem- Xanthi connecting Bulgaria and Greece	Lack of funding, Lack of data in digital form, Need for youth engagement	Development and promotion of the Rhodope Brand (rebranding of Bulgaria in the framework of the campaign Wonders of Bulgaria)
Georgia	Maka Dvalishvili	Georgian Arts and Cultural Center	Promoting Heritage- and Culture-based Experiential Tourism in the Black Sea Basin, Rediscover Traditional Knowledge in European Creative Industries	Definition of heritage, Silo effect between authorities, Lack of cross-disciplinarity in the creative industries, Lack of creative economy strategy, Inadequate legislative framework and managment structure	Improvements of legal framework & policy for the protection of cultural heritage,
Turkey	Hasan Bektaş	Haydarpaşa Solidarity for Society	Haydarpaşa, Istanbul's Central Station	Government oppression, administrative penalties, exile & imprisonment	Documentation of heritage, Adopt heritage preservation and reuse practices according to international charters, Protection of public spaces, Include civil society in the decision-making process (enhance democracy)

GREEN PANEL



Ioanna Mikrou, Moderator



Vesna Marjanovic, Europa Nostra, Serbia



George Sachinis, Urban Dig project (Water - Adrianio), **Greece**



Slavka Bozukova, Cultural Heritage Society Bulgaria, **Bulgaria**

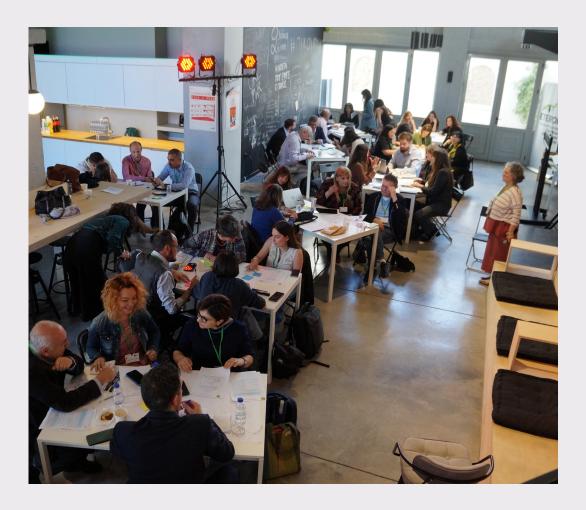


Hasan Bektaş, Haydarpaşa Solidarity for Society, City and Environment, Turkey



Maka Dvalishvili, Georgian Arts and Cultural Center, Georgia

GREEN PANEL GROUP DISCUSSIONS



				ated by Amalia Zepou	
Country	Presenter	Organisation	Project	Challenges	Priorities
Armenia	Monika Sargsyan	KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation	Creative Tourism	Preservation vs. Development, Pressures from tourism, intense urbanization and cultural appropriation	Prioritise sustainable practices that benefit both heritage preservation and community development, i.e. economic growth and community well-being, Community involvement and empowerment to address challenges collectively, Provide resources and support for community- led heritage initiatives
Turkey	Yiğit Ozar	Europa Nostra Turkiye	The Prinkipo Greek Orphanage in İstanbul, Solidarity actions after the earthquake	Problematic policy implementation due to conflict between central and local authorities, Limited potential for civil society participation, Lack of funding	Empower civil society participation, Include cultural heritage in the strategic planning at all governance levels
North Macedonia	Simona Dimkovska	Cultural Echoes	Reuse of abandoned Buildings - Establisment of a "Youth Center" in the Partizan sport hall	No legislative protection for industrial heritage	Need to revise Spatial Urban Plannning policy, Develop a legislative framework for the protection and reuse of industrial built heritage, Advocacy
Kosovo	Ares Shporta	Lumbardhi Foundation	Reviving Lumbardhi Cinema	Inadequate legal framework, Lack of cultural heritage expertise, Limited capacity for programmatic development	Develop the framework(s) for collaborative and participatory decision- making process
Kosovo	Brixhita Deda	ex-Youth Ambassador at Europa Nostra	Creation of an atlas of (pre) war buildings in Prishtina	Gentrification, Rapid urbanization and loss/ destruction of heritage,	Refinement and Enforcement of legal frameworks for Documentation and Digitization of heritage,
Greece	Stavros Stellas	Cultural Association Archilochos in the island of Paros	Citizens movement to reclaim the beaches in Paros, Greece	Legal framework for protecting natural landscape (acess to beaches, wind generators), Pressures from overtourism	Empower & involve the community against the impacts of overtourism and for protection of natural & cultural landscape

SOCIAL PANEL



Amalia Zepou, Moderator



Monika Sargsyan, Armenia, KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation, Armenia



Yiğit Ozar, Europa Nostra Turkey, Turkey



Simona Dimkovska, Cultural Echoes, North Macedonia



Ares Shporta, Lumbardhi Foundation, **Kosovo**



Stavros Stellas, Cultural Association Archilochos, Greece



Brixhita Deda, Europa Nostra Youth Ambassador, Kosovo

SOCIAL PANEL GROUP DISCUSSIONS



DIGITAL PANEL moderated by Stavroula Thravalou					U
Country	Presenter	Organisation	Project	Challenges	Priorities
Greece	Pavlos Chatzigrigoriou	HERMeS NGO	Documenting Heritage Festival in Syros, Greece	Open source and creative reuse of data, Community engagement	Support local communities, Place making, Digitisation of tangible & intangible heritage
Montenegro	Stefan Jeremic	NVO Zlatni vez	Golden embroidery	Low level of awareness, Endangered traditional handcraft - low knowledge transfer, Lack of capacity in government, Lack of digital documentation	Documentation and digitisation of data Trans-generational knoweledge transfer, Recognise authenticity
Armenia	Mariam Vardanyan Andranik	ReArmenia	Collaborative resources platform (for knowledge, funds, expertise and network)	Heritage actors not familiar with digital tools	Expand the platform to embrace more cultural heritage projects
Greece	Kontantina Siountri	Perrevia Network	Pan-Hellenic (Greece) and International Cultural Heritage Digitization Conferences (Cyprus)	Address climate change challenges, Integrate artificial inteligence for the preservation and documentation of heritage, Manaze open data platforms and repositories	Leverage innovativ technologies for conservation, Foster a community-based approach
Bosnia Herzegovina	Adisa Džino Šuta	Cultural Heritage Without Borders Bosnia	Balkan Cultural Aid Response for Emergencies (smartphone application, augmented reality tools)	Lack of preparedness in case of natural disasters, Concept of cultural heritage (nationalistic approaches), Limited knowledge transfer in traditional techniques	Develop multidisciplinary approaches, Promote heritage education at school level, Awareness raising & advocacy
Kosovo	Blerta Ismaili	Cultural Heritage Without Borders Kosovo	Platform for intangible heritage	Intense urbanization, Post-War Reconstruction, Capacity Building	Incorporate sustainable aspects in heritage conservation, Engage local communities Awareness raising Capacity building

DIGITAL PANEL



Stavroula Thravalou, Moderator



Pavlos Chatzigrigoriou, HERMeS NGO, Greece



Stefan Jeremic, NVO Zlatni vez, **Montenegro**



Konstantina Siountri, Perrevia Network / Lecturer at MSc Digital Culture, Smart Cities, Greece



Blerta Ismaili, Cultural Heritage Without Borders, Kosovo



Mariam Vardanyan Andranik, ReArmenia, Armenia



Adisa Džino Šuta, Cultural Heritage Without Borders, Bosnia Herzegovina

DIGITAL PANEL GROUP DISCUSSIONS



Country Bosnia	Presenter Senada Demirovic	Organisation IDEAA Urban House	Project Partisan Memorial Cemetery in Mostar	Challenges Social cohesion & post-war trauma (still healing)	Priorities Education & training, Inclusive processes (listening) Protect public spaces & enhance the sense of belonging
North Macedonia	Tijana-Ana Spasovska	Jardo Association	Advocacy, Networking & Civil-Public Partnership	Inadequate legislation framework, Lack of transparency & political will	Efficient & inclusive legislation framework & policy, Education and capacity building, Youth engagement, Cross-border networking
Montenegro	David Radovic	Studio Prostor d.o.o	Research on disrupted identity of protected areas	Lack of education, Political instability, Preservation vs. development, Offical vs unoffial notions of heritage	Integrated approach, Training & capacity building, Promote technologica innovations, Promote adaptive re- use of built heritage
Albania	Dorina Xheraj-Subashi	Center for development of Museums Heritage and Culture. MuZEH Lab Center	Old Doors Trail	Local Government, Funding, Trust with the community	Community training, European Integration, Training
Albania	Regina Vathi	Cultural Heritage Without Borders Albania	Summer camps for heritage conservation	Difficulty with youth engagement, Constraints with the educational system, Funding	Innovation and entrepreneurship in education, Advocacy, Funding, Digitisation
Bosnia- Herzegovina	Amra Hadzimuhamedovic	Centre for Cultural Heritage International Forum Bosnia,	International Summer School Youth and Heritage	Heritage authorities, Political pressures, Definition of Heritage	Inclusive heritage discourse, Formal and Informal notions of heritage

YOUTH PANEL



Jasna Popovic, Moderator



Tijana Spasovska, Jadro Association North Macedonia



David Radovic, Studio Prostor d.o.o, Montenegro



Dorina Xheraj-Subashi, Center for development of Museums, Heritage and Culture. MuZEH Lab Center, Albania



dr. Senada Demirović Habibija, Urban House IDEAA Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Amra Hadzimuhamedovic, Centre for Cultural Heritage International Forum Bosnia, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

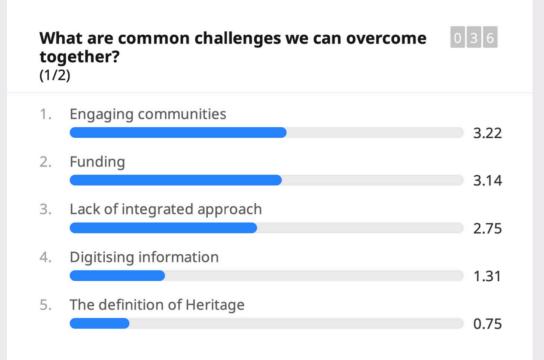


Regina Vathi, Cultural Heritage Without Borders, **Albania**

YOUTH PANEL GROUP DISCUSSIONS



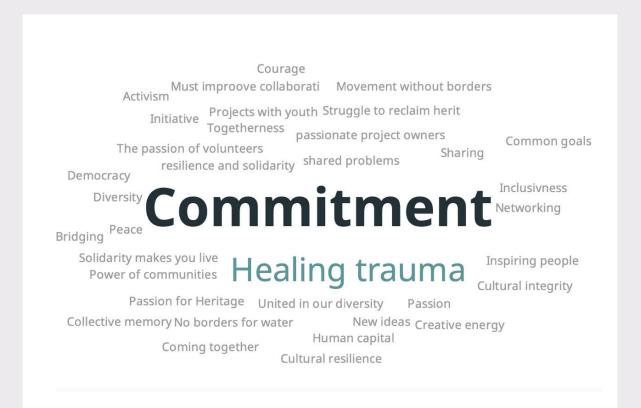
Challenges



Priorities

What are the most important priorities		
1.	Training	1.80
2.	Advocacy	1.54
3.	European Support	1.11
4.	Digitilization	0.40

CLOSING DAY ONE



The Mayor of Athens, Haris Doukas and Elliniki Etairia hosted a reception at the City Hall during which Europa Nostra, Elliniki Etairia and the Municipality of Athens renewed their cooperation concerning the Athens Heritage Hub. Special reference was made to the role of local authorities in supporting civil society to address environmental priorities through cultural heritage activities.







DAY TWO

9 April 2024, Encouraging Collaborations and Reflecting on Future Plans

IDEAS FOR CROSS BORDER COLLABORATIONS

Using a participatory approach, a few project ideas were initiated by the participants.



Everyone chose the project/idea they wished to work on. Some participants chose to move between groups contributing as well as making links between the ideas being created. The following five projects/ideas were worked on:

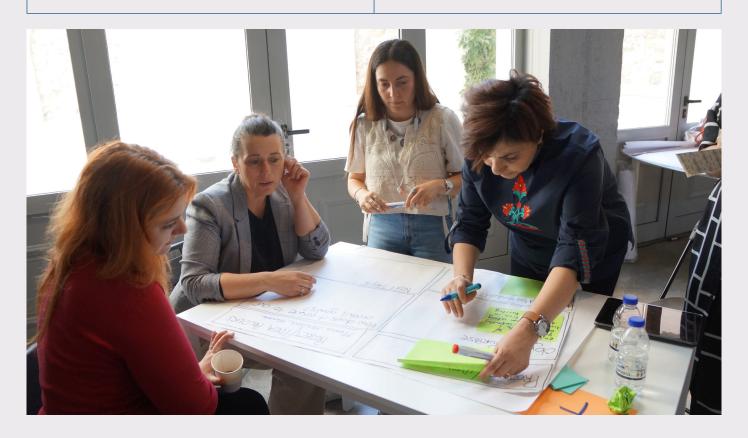
Project/Idea Title: Life Paths - water and monument (cross border Festival)	Project/Idea Holders: ELLET, Urban Dig Project, Europa Nostra Turkey, Heritage - management organisation	
 Purpose/Objective: Revealing and restoring - good practices on water use through four cities (Istabul, Izmir, Athens, Thessaloniki) Using water heritage to prevent water crisis (part of climate change) Using water heritage as a prototype to create cross-border collaboration and sustain peace Rediscovering the old memories and good practices to adapt the past to the present preservation of water heritage and necessity 	 How does this relate to the European Heritage Hub overall goals? Green: Use water as the main tool for achieving resilience by treating natural and human environment as one Social: Focus on community engagement through the festival. Example of tools include, oral history translated into troubadours (composing music and lyrics of the oral history) Digital: Digitisation of the oral history, the music created and the monuments. 	
 Who should be involved? Municipalities of Istanbul, Izmir, Athens and Thessaloniki European programme calls New European Bauhaus Public institutions like RCE "Netherlands" Heritage Agency Academics 	 Next Steps Ensure sustainability of the project through training of the people to act as multipliers for their community and manage the festival for their community to continue it on a crossborder annual basis. (maybe even take it on tour) Creating a digital platform including the data (oral history, songs, etc.), that will be interactive, open and accessible to exchange, good practices about cross border water heritage, as well as rebuilding new methods 	



Project/Idea Title: Preservation of Built Environment Network	Project/Idea Holders: ELLET, CHWB Albania, HERMES	
 Purpose/Objective: Scholarship programme (cross border/regional) for a cultural heritage degree - exchange, training, capacity building Convince EU to provide funds to preserve tangible heritage (build environment - deteriorated or abandoned buildings) Organise a regional summit involving local and governmental authority representatives which takes place onsite and in person 	 How does this relate to the European Heritage Hub overall goals? Empowerment of youth and education Contribute to preserve the environment and natural resources Boost local economy 	
 Who should be involved? Youth institutions, universities, cultural heritage related organisations Mayors, institutional officials, representatives of governments 	 Next Steps Identify key (wo)men experts to join the platform/network Develop curricula/thematic focus of the scholarship Map potential cultural/heritage sites and documentation of tangible heritage and preservation 	



Project/Idea Title: Hack the Culture ON	Project/Idea Holders: KASA Foundation, IDEAA, ReArmenia	
 Purpose/Objective: Enforcement of young people's ownership and empathy through problem solving and exploration of cultural heritage 1-week hackathon (3 days hack, 1-2 days community) Community engagement team Heritage preservation team Digital initiative creativity team Culture fusion team 	 How does this relate to the European Heritage Hub overall goals? It is all about collaboration, commitment, community engagement Ecological transformation Social transformation 	
 Who should be involved? 1-2 participants from each country of Europa Nostra Athens Hub network 	 Next Steps Creation of consortium Definition of the roles Drafting the concept Fundraising/Campaign management - estimated budget of 80,000 € for 33 people from 11 countries Implementation 	



Project/Idea Title: Regional Restoration Camps	Project/Idea Holders: Lumbardi Foundation, CHWB Kosovo, Brixhita, ELLET	
 Purpose/Objective: Learning exchange about preserving crafts and restoration techniques Modeling cross border collaboration and sustainability Digital mapping of housing energy efficiency 	 How does this relate to the European Heritage Hub overall goals? Green Youth/Education Digital 	
 Who should be involved? Local NGOs National and local institutions/associations Others (private sector) Vocational/Technical schools Academia 	 Next Steps Funding and resources Locations and agreements in place Network of partners and stakeholders in place 	



Project/Idea Title: Craft Bridges (between cross generations)	Project/Idea Holders: MUSEH Lab Georgian Arts and Culture Centre NGO Embroidery Spesejka Contra Punt
 Purpose/Objective: Mapping and studying endangered crafts in the region Popularising crafts Product development Training youth Market access Inter regional (pilot project) Ambassadors of crafts in the region 	 How does this relate to the European Heritage Hub overall goals? Digital (online materials) Green technology/Eco friendly Social benefits for artisans, gender equality, inter generational transferability, support for emerging artists, people with less opportunities and students
 Who should be involved? Crafts people Ethnologists Museums Designers Researchers Universities Youth - 25 + NGOs SMEs Heritage practitioners IT specialists 	 Next Steps Sustainability through online documentation courses - movies for the future, transferability of knowledge, selling online Join already existing platforms for networking Expanding with other crafts



As the above discussions were being presented in plenary, Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic and Amalia Zepou connected to the meeting of the European Commission Expert Group on Cultural Heritage happening in Brussels to present the outcomes of the event.





NEXT STEPS & FUTURE PLANS



Next steps to disseminate the conference outcomes:

- compile a) a report and b) a catalogue of the projects presented by the organisations to be shared with the European Commission as a concrete outcome of the meeting. The catalogue would highlight the common challenges and themes for example the reuse of abandoned buildings - which could contribute to the New European Bauhaus
- prepare a press release in English
- translated and published in all the participating countries
- Issue a joint statement for the endangered heritage of the Universal Hall in Skopje targeting relevant local, national and European authorities Other ways of being involved and active within Europa Nostra's network include:
- Joining Europa Nostra as a member organisation or individual member
- Submit a nomination for the 7 most Endangered programme
- Participate in upcoming important events
- 20th anniversary of Mostar bridge in Bosnia Herzegovina (July 2024)
- European Cultural Heritage Summit in Bucharest on 6-8 October2024
- COP29 in Baku Azerbaijan in November 2024
- Europa NostraN Serbia Heritage Forum (date tbc)

Eirini: Change our notion of community involvement, make citizens agents Yiğit: Involve many interested cities in Turkey

Kostas: Include History in our narratives

Jasna presented la Lista Roja

and is proud of her Youth Panel

Monika: felt encouraged

Mariam: First time abroad,

please keep in touch

Muge: Connect Culture with Democracy

Eleni: Identify our common challenges

Maka: Enjoyed being in this geographical combination of Georgia, Armenia, Turkey and the Balkans

Tijana said she was empowered by this conference. She and Simona suggest preparing a statement for the burning building in Skopje. Amalia asked if this could be a structural tool/service of the hub

Alexandra Learnt new things and thanked everyone

Marina Congratulated the effort and thanked everyone

> Senada - initiation to Mostar

Stavroula mentioned the key role of cities → identify like minded mayors - establish linkages of heritage with local authorities in Balkan countries - involve Eurocities/ ICLEI?

Amalia - more community involvement

Connecting Civil Society for Heritage

The conference took place in the framework of the EU-funded «European Heritage Hub» pilot project, which aims to expand the network and impact of the Hub in the EU's neighbouring regions.





European Heritage Hub



Co-funded by the European Union