



# FOSTERING COOPERATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION ON SKILLS, TRAINING AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER IN CULTURAL HERITAGE PROFESSIONS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the first time a group of national experts has been invited by the Council of the European Union to investigate skills, training and knowledge transfer in the heritage professions in Europe<sup>1</sup>.

The group operated during 2017 and 2018 under the Open Method of Coordination (OMC)<sup>2</sup>. This is a flexible but structured way European Union member states use to cooperate at European level in the field of culture, with the support of the European Commission.

The group benefited from the results of the brainstorming exercise of a group of heritage stakeholders, launched under the 'Voices of Culture'. The group produced in 2017 the *Brainstorming Report Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe — Prospectus on Skills, Training and Knowledge Transfer for Traditional and Emerging Heritage Professions*<sup>3</sup>.

This work also contributes to the objective of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, to 'support the development of specialised skills and improve knowledge management and knowledge transfer in the cultural heritage sector, taking into account the implications of the digital shift', and the European Initiative 'Heritage Related Skills'<sup>4</sup>, launched by the European Commission in order to make sure the European Year leaves a policy imprint beyond 2018.

- 1 Cultural heritage constitutes one of four priorities of the current *Work Plan for Culture* 2015-2018, and cooperation on skills, training and knowledge transfer within the heritage sector is the topic selected for 2017-2018 (2014/C 463/02)
- 2 The OMC method is anchored in the European Agenda for Culture. Through an exchange of good practices between EU countries, it contributes to improving the design and implementation of policies, which are outside regulatory instruments.
- 3 Voices of Culture — Structured dialogue between the European Commission and the cultural sector, provides a framework for discussions between EU civil society stakeholders and the European Commission with regard to culture. <http://www.voicesofculture.eu/skills-training-knowledge-transfer-in-cultural-heritage/>
- 4 [https://ec.europa.eu/culture/content/heritage-related-skills\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/culture/content/heritage-related-skills_en)



OUR HERITAGE:  
WHERE THE PAST  
MEETS THE FUTURE





## A new European landscape for heritage professions

In the space of just a few years, the European policy framework concerning cultural heritage has been completely overhauled. This culminated with declaring 2018 as the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH)<sup>5</sup>. This new framework moves towards a holistic approach to cultural heritage, centred on individuals and communities, eliminating the divisions between tangible, intangible and digital dimensions. It looks at cultural heritage as a shared resource, highlighting that all stakeholders share the responsibility for its transmission to future generations. It stresses the need to progress towards a more integrated approach to its conservation and management, across different policy areas, in order to maximise its benefits on our economy, culture, environment and the society as a whole. This new framework changes the way cultural institutions manage, protect and give access to their heritage. It changes the way citizens and communities engage with their cultural heritage and naturally also influences the way professionals deal with it.

### Why publish this report?

This report aims to be a resource for the European Union to ensure the long-term sustainability of Europe's cultural heritage. The most effective way to manage, protect, promote and enhance our irreplaceable patrimony is to make certain that the people who carry out this work – and all stakeholders who make decisions affecting cultural heritage – have the skills required, both traditional and emerging, to fulfill these complex, challenging and necessary roles.

### What are the key messages?

While European expertise in heritage preservation and conservation is renowned, the combined effect of the age pyramid, cuts in public budgets, the digital shift and academisation of society are affecting the wider transmission of knowledge and skills. This happens at a time when new skills and competences are needed, to progress towards more integrated and participatory management of cultural heritage, and better use of the opportunities offered by the new technologies to preserve heritage and enhance the visitor experience and public engagement in heritage sites and museums. It is urgent for Europe to consider how best to enhance, promote and protect the traditional, technical and professional skills of the people who ensure the long-term sustainability of Europe's cultural heritage.

### Who is this report written for?

The recommendations and good practice case studies in this report are directed at the main critical stakeholders: policymakers (at national and European Union level); education and training institutions, cultural institutions and professional representative associations.

### How was the content created?

*Experts*<sup>6</sup> discussed and developed the many related issues which affect the current supply of, and demand for, cultural heritage training and employment. The group put together national SWOT analyses and combined these to elicit themes. Reports published by the European Commission and other sources were also widely consulted.

5 Decision (EU) 2017/864 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on a European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018)

6 The expert group is composed by experts from 22 Member states + Iceland and is Chaired by Ana Galan (ES). 2 Representatives of the Voices of Culture group on heritage professions participated



Four workgroups were created to concentrate on the four main areas in the professional timeline of the cultural heritage workforce: raising awareness; education and training; lifelong learning and knowledge transfer. The rationale for this approach can be summarised thus:



**Tom and his family:** They enjoy visiting museums, heritage sites and craft fairs during their holidays. However, they have no idea what is happening behind the scenes of heritage. How can we help them discover the world of heritage work? Can we motivate Tom to start a career as a craftsman or even inspire Tom's granddad to become a volunteer?



**Myriem and her friends:** Myriem studies architecture. However, in her curriculum there is very little on repair and conservation for our heritage buildings and monuments. Her boyfriend Mo who studies digital technology, has no idea that the heritage sector is desperately looking for his skills. How can we help these students to link with heritage work?



**David and his colleagues:** They care for the cultural heritage and collections. They have been working in the field for several years now. All of them want to deepen their skills and innovate their work processes. However, they have no professional development plan and so little time. How can we help these heritage workers to upskill and to develop a new heritage practice?



**Laura and her network:** Laura is a conservator-restorer with a lot of experience and a high-level of skills and knowledge. She is very well connected to other colleagues, experts and skilled craftspeople. This network would like to share their knowledge and skills, especially as many of them are near retirement age, but today there are too few opportunities to do so. Time and financial restraints limit the possibility to recruit young professionals...

*Icons by Freepik, Young Avatar Collection, flaticon.com*

Wouldn't it be great if Laura and her network could share their passion with Tom and his family? If they could inspire Myriem and her friends to link with heritage work? And what if they could support David and his colleagues in deepening their skills and developing innovation? Moreover, wouldn't it be even better if this process of knowledge exchange was more than a case of one-way traffic? Can we create ways so in which Laura and her network can also learn a lot of new skills in the process? How can we make this happen?

Tom, Myriem, David and Laura represent the four phases in the development of people, in which they can choose to develop interest for, knowledge of and skills in cultural heritage. It is the personal timeline of (potential) heritage professionals. Each phase has an effect on the other phase, and the phase in which Laura is currently, can have a direct influence on young children like Tom and his whole family. It shows that people are the centre of knowledge and skills transfer and that it is therefore important to invest in them, in order to protect and develop our heritage.



## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The general and specific recommendations in the report draw upon practical examples, good practice case studies and the lessons learned. The recommendations will require actions and coordination by the main critical stakeholders: policymakers (at national and European Union level); education and training institutions, cultural institutions and professional representative associations.

These summary recommendations aim at maximising the benefits and value to be gained by Europe due to improving the cultural heritage professions' skills, training and knowledge transfer. This can be summarised under the four pillars of the EYCH: engagement, protection, sustainability and innovation, as well as the transversal dimension of international relations.

### Engagement

Cultural heritage professionals are the best placed actors to communicate to the whole community the vital relationship between the health of society and our cultural heritage.

*Traditional and innovative communications skills training should be devised for all actors (public, policy, professionals and mediators) to improve mutual understanding and empowerment, with online information portals and networks to raise awareness and transmit knowledge and skills, together working towards the common purpose of heritage protection and implementation of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention).*

### Sustainability

Expert cultural heritage professionals personify a specific public good as they are an essential requirement for sustainable heritage protection and preservation.

*Cultural heritage professionals should be enabled to validate the full breadth of their formally and non-formally gained knowledge and skills, and thereby register for recognition in certification schemes operating to criteria that would accord accredited professionals 'specialist' status for recruitment and procurement purposes, with smart skills profiles for increased personal mobility.*

### Protection

Cultural heritage professional associations play a crucial role to augment public policy on cultural heritage, by motivating the continuing professional development of members to maintain and enhance their core and transversal knowledge and skills to adapt to current and future skills demands.

*The detailed expert knowledge held by the main actors representing the cultural heritage sector, should combine with the policy-making expertise of the public sector to set out vehicles to identify and map cultural heritage professions (including skills at risk), improve data collection and analysis in order to classify these occupations, assess current and forecast skills needs, and to recommend frameworks of cross-sectoral training co-operation.*

## Innovation

Cultural heritage professionals combine traditional, creative and innovative methods working in an interdisciplinary environment to research, assess and carry out work that affects our irreplaceable patrimony while retaining its significance for future generations.

*Educational and training centres of excellence should provide entry-level and advanced cultural heritage training, fourth-level research programmes, lifelong learning opportunities and structured knowledge-exchange activities for the cultural heritage workforce and professions which interact with it, utilising (where appropriate) cultural heritage standards, and seeking EU funding for training and research in association with sector representative bodies.*

## International dimension

Europe is renowned for the quality of heritage professionals, training institutions and research centres. European cultural heritage professionals, whose expertise is often requested abroad, can help build bridges between people, communities and countries, reinforcing intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding, thus contributing to the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations (2016).

*EU cooperation with international organisations focusing on training of heritage professionals such as ICCROM, should be reinforced and promoted. Opportunities and funds for education, training and the mobility of cultural professionals at EU level, should include measures aimed at facilitating the exchange of experiences among heritage professionals at a global level.*

The full report contains more detailed recommendations, expanding on these summary recommendations and going into more detail about how actions should be done.



## For further information, please contact:

### European Commission

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

Directorate D – Culture & Creativity

Unit D1 – Cultural Policy

Contact: Erminia Sciacchitano

Email: [EAC-UNITE-D1@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAC-UNITE-D1@ec.europa.eu)



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