



A brief history

The European Heritage Days originated in Granada (Spain) on 3 October 1985, during the Second Conference of European Ministers responsible for Architectural Heritage of the Council of Europe. On that occasion, the French Minister of Culture suggested that the “Monuments Open Doors” scheme launched in France in 1984 be extended to other European countries. Several countries, such as the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Malta, Belgium, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Sweden, soon set up similar events. In 2010, the European Heritage Days will celebrate their 25th anniversary.

In 1991, the Council of Europe officially launched the European Heritage Days with the support of the European Commission. Since their launch at European level, the Days have taken on new importance every year. All States Parties to the Council of Europe’s European Cultural Convention now take part in the European Heritage Days, which are always popular with the public and have become a fixture on the member states’ annual cultural calendars.

In 1999, they became a joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The programme of the European Heritage

Days was reoriented and revitalised in 2008 to give a stronger European dimension to the initiative. The European Heritage Forum on “Heritage and Dialogue” was the first in a new series of high-level international events with the aim of communicating on the cultural heritage in Europe (Brussels, 23-24 October 2008). The Forums are preceded by a joint Council of Europe/European Commission press conference with a view to bringing the European Heritage Days to the attention of a wider public.



A broader view of heritage

The aims of the European Heritage Days are to:

- raise citizens’ awareness of Europe’s cultural diversity and richness and create a climate in which appreciation of the rich mosaic of European cultures is fostered;
- combat racism and xenophobia and encourage greater tolerance in Europe across national borders;
- strengthen a sense of shared identity among all Europeans;
- inform the public and the political authorities of the need to protect cultural heritage against new threats;
- encourage Europe to respond to the social, political and economic challenges it faces.

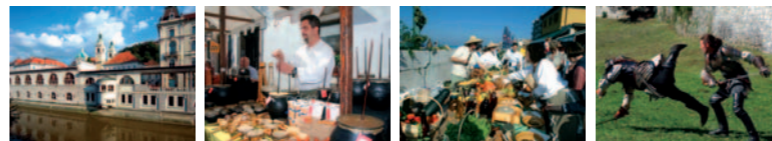
The success of the European Heritage Days is made possible by this broader view of heritage as well as the effective international co-ordination between the Council of Europe and the European Commission and the work carried out with the Group of National Co-ordinators.



European events on the occasion of the European Heritage Days

The Second European Heritage Forum will take place in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 23 September 2009. The theme this year will be “Heritage, creativity and innovation” and the forum will be a contribution to the 2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation. It will take place in the context of the European Heritage Days events in Slovenia and in the context of the Slovenian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers. The forum will bring together heritage specialists from all over Europe with the aim in the medium term of it becoming the annual “crossroads” of cultural heritage specialists in Europe.

As in 2008, the forum will be preceded by a joint Council of Europe/European Commission press conference in Brussels, on 18 September. The Council of Europe and the European Commission will be joined at the press conference by Europa Nostra, which will announce the award of one of its prizes.



The 49 States Parties to the Council of Europe’s European Cultural Convention (1954)

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.



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