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Europe

PRESS RELEASE

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## Plácido Domingo and EU Commissioner Navracsics announce Grand Prix winners of the European Heritage Awards 2017 in Turku

**Turku, 15 May 2017** – The winners of the 2017 EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards, Europe's top honour in the field, were celebrated this evening during a high-profile event at St. Michael's Church in Turku, Finland. Maestro **Plácido Domingo**, President of Europa Nostra, the leading heritage organisation in Europe, and **Tibor Navracsics**, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, co-hosted the European Heritage Awards Ceremony. They announced and presented the 7 Grand Prix and the Public Choice Award, chosen from among the 29 winning achievements of this year.

The 7 **Grand Prix laureates**, selected by an independent [jury](#) of experts and entitled to receive €10,000 each, are:

### Category Conservation

- Baroque Complex and Gardens in Kuks, Hradec Králové Region, CZECH REPUBLIC
- The King's Road across Filefjell, NORWAY
- Cultural Palace, in Blaj, Transylvania, ROMANIA
- Roof for the Ruins of the Monastery of San Juan, Burgos, SPAIN

### Category Research

- Bosch Research and Conservation Project, 's-Hertogenbosch, THE NETHERLANDS

### Category Dedicated Service

- Mr. Ferdinand Meder, Zagreb, CROATIA

### Category Education, Training and Awareness-Raising

- Centre of Visual Arts and Research, Nicosia, CYPRUS

The **Public Choice Award**, which is in its sixth edition, goes to [Mr. Zoltán Kallós](#), who has devotedly compiled collections of music, dance, storytelling and crafts of the Hungarian, Romanian, Saxon and Roma communities of Transylvania in **Romania** for over 70 years. It is the first time that an accomplishment in the category **Dedicated Service to Heritage** obtains the highest number of votes. Over **11,500 people** voted for their favourite heritage achievements in Europe via an online poll conducted by Europa Nostra.

During the ceremony, the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards were presented to [29 winners](#) from 18 countries taking part in the EU's Creative Europe programme. In addition, two exemplary projects from [Switzerland](#) and [Turkey](#), European countries that are not participating in that programme, also received a Europa Nostra Award.

*"It has been an enormous privilege to meet and honour all Award winners in the beautiful historic city of Turku on the occasion of Finland's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence. Each winner is a shining example for all of us who care and work for our common heritage. Our Awards Ceremony and Congress in Turku was also the perfect occasion to mobilise our award winners, members and partners to actively contribute to the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018. We must not miss this historic opportunity to put our shared cultural heritage where it belongs – at the very heart of the European project which we need to revive!"* stated **Plácido Domingo**, the renowned opera singer and President of Europa Nostra.

*"Once again, the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards celebrate the talent of excellent craftspeople and professionals, the tireless work of volunteers, and the devoted efforts of educators, who ensure that our cultural heritage can be enjoyed today and safeguarded for future generations. Europe's cultural heritage is one of its most valuable resources. Its value is not just symbolic - it has a positive impact on our quality of life, on our economy and on our society. I am delighted that 2018 will be the European Year of Cultural Heritage. This is a great opportunity to make EU citizens from all backgrounds aware of the value of our shared cultural heritage, the risks it faces and the opportunities it offers for fostering social inclusion and building the communities of the future,"* said **Tibor Navracsics**, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

The Awards Ceremony in Turku was attended by some 1,200 people, including heritage professionals, volunteers and supporters from across Europe as well as top-level representatives from EU institutions, Member States and the host country.

The Awards Ceremony was the closing public event of the [European Heritage Congress](#) that has brought hundreds of heritage players from all over Europe to Turku on 11-15 May. Organised by Europa Nostra and its country representation Europa Nostra Finland, the Congress was supported by the City of Turku, numerous public and private bodies from Finland and other European countries as well as by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

In 2018, the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards will be used as a pivotal instrument for promoting the key objectives and messages of the **European Year of Cultural Heritage**. The **Call for Entries 2018** for this Special Edition of the Awards Scheme will be posted on 1 June 2017 on the Awards website: [www.europeanheritageawards.eu/apply](http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/apply)

## [TRANSLATIONS](#)

## [PHOTOS OF THE CEREMONY](#)

*to be made available soon*

## [VIDEO OF THE CEREMONY](#)

*to be made available soon*

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## TO FIND OUT MORE

About each winning project:  
[information and jury's comments](#),  
[high-resolution photos](#) and [videos](#)  
Twitter: [@europanostra](#)

[Creative Europe website](#)  
Twitter: [@europe\\_creative](#)  
[Commissioner Navracsics website](#)

## **7 Grand Prix laureates** *(listed alphabetically by country)*

### Category Conservation

#### [Baroque Complex and Gardens in Kuks, Hradec Králové Region, CZECH REPUBLIC](#)

The Kuks complex – consisting of a residence, a spa, a hospital, a church, a cemetery, a pharmacy as well as sprawling gardens – was in such an unfortunate state that most buildings were unsuitable for use. The Awards' jury states that the multi-disciplinary Kuks - Pomegranate project is an exemplary approach to an integrated building and landscape conservation which is of the highest quality.

#### [The King's Road across Filefjell, NORWAY](#)

The restoration of the historic King's Road, which winds through the breath-taking landscape of the mountainous Filefjell, was undertaken with the help of Sherpas from Nepal and experts from Germany. The Awards' jury highlights that this integrated project of cultural and landscape heritage conservation is of top quality and was undertaken with a real focus on best practice in building.

#### [Cultural Palace in Blaj, Transylvania, ROMANIA](#)

Built in 1930, the Cultural Palace was the only centre for cultural activities, such as concerts, plays, film projections and exhibitions, in the small city of Blaj. Following a fire in 1995, the building was seriously damaged and remained a ruin until 2012. The Awards' jury appreciates how the restoration successfully evoked the lost architecture of this ruined historic building with minimal interventions.

#### [Roof for the Ruins of the Monastery of San Juan, Burgos, SPAIN](#)

Thanks to a well-designed roof – made possible with European funds – the surviving elements of this 11<sup>th</sup> century monastery are now well preserved and a new protected space to celebrate cultural activities has been created. The Awards' jury noted that the solution is non-invasive, totally reversible and completely discernible from the old fabric.

## Category Research

### [Bosch Research and Conservation Project, 's-Hertogenbosch, THE NETHERLANDS](#)

Following seven years of dedicated research, a wealth of new information about the world-famous artist Hieronymous Bosch was discovered and shared in exhibitions, books and an innovative website. The Awards' jury states that this project not only represents innovations in research, conservation and technology but is also an excellent example of the link between research and the conservation of art.

## Category Dedicated Service

### [Mr. Ferdinand Meder, Zagreb, CROATIA](#)

Mr. Ferdinand Meder has dedicated his entire career, from 1970 until today, to the protection of Croatian cultural heritage. He has acted as the first response to numerous threats to Croatia's heritage from earthquakes to military conflict. The Awards' jury highlights that Mr. Meder has gone beyond the call of duty and, even in periods of conflict, has exercised his unflinching dedication to the defence of heritage.

## Category Education, Training and Awareness-Raising

### [Centre of Visual Arts and Research, Nicosia, CYPRUS](#)

For over 25 years, Costas and Rita Severis have created a rich collection of visual representations of Cyprus from the 18th to the 20th century. The Centre of Visual Arts and Research promotes Cypriot cultural heritage within a framework of peaceful coexistence and encourages a better understanding of the country's shared heritage. The project has had tangible results in bi-communal Nicosia and beyond.

## Background

The [European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards](#) were launched by the European Commission in 2002 and has been run by Europa Nostra since then. It celebrates and promotes best practices related to heritage conservation, research, management, voluntarism, education and communication. In this way, it contributes to a stronger public recognition of cultural heritage as a strategic resource for Europe's economy and society. The Prize is supported by the **Creative Europe** programme of the European Union.

Since 2002, independent expert juries have selected **455 award-winning projects** from **34 countries**. In line with the number of entries, **Spain** tops the list with 61 awards received. The **United Kingdom** is in second place with 60. **Italy** comes third (37 awards), **Germany** fourth (29 awards), and **Greece** fifth (27 awards). Regarding the **categories**, Conservation has the most winners (267) followed by Dedicated Service to Heritage (67), Education, Training and Awareness-Raising (65), and, lastly, Research (56).

A total of **102 Grand Prix** of €10,000 have been presented to outstanding heritage initiatives, selected from among the award-winning projects.

The EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards has further strengthened the capacity of the heritage sector in Europe by highlighting best practices, encouraging the cross-border exchange of knowledge and connecting various stakeholders in wider networks. It has also brought major benefits to the winners, such as greater (inter)national exposure, follow-on funding and increased visitor numbers. In addition, it has raised awareness of our shared heritage amongst the general public while highlighting its intrinsic European character. The Prize is therefore a key tool to promote excellence for heritage in Europe.

[Europa Nostra](#) is the pan-European federation of heritage NGO's which is also supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals. Covering more than 40 countries in Europe, the organisation is the voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting Europe's cultural and natural heritage. Founded in 1963, it is today recognised as the most representative heritage network in Europe.

Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through 'The 7 Most Endangered' programme. It celebrates excellence through the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. It also contributes to the formulation and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage, through a structured dialogue with European Institutions and the coordination of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3. Europa Nostra has strongly promoted and will actively contribute to the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018.

[Creative Europe](#) is the new EU programme to support the cultural and creative sectors, enabling them to increase their contribution to jobs and growth. With a budget of €1.46 billion for 2014-2020, it supports organisations in the fields of heritage, performing arts, fine arts, interdisciplinary arts, publishing, film, TV, music, and video games as well as tens of thousands of artists, cultural and audiovisual professionals. The funding will allow them to operate across Europe, to reach new audiences and to develop the skills required in the digital age.