



PRESS RELEASE

Europa Nostra's President Maestro Plácido Domingo renews his call for contributions to the #Ode2Joy Challenge

The Hague / Brussels, 28 February 2019 - Three months ahead of the European Elections, Europa Nostra and its President **Plácido Domingo** renew their call for participation in the **#Ode2Joy Challenge** as a way of celebrating our shared cultural heritage and European values. For Europe Day on 9 May 2019, all citizens in Europe and beyond are invited to take up this challenge. Plácido Domingo has set the tone by releasing his own enthusiastic [contribution](#) to the #Ode2Joy Challenge.

The video was recorded in the historic [Opera theatre of Sao Carlos](#) in Lisbon, Portugal, during the rehearsals for the final gala evening of the 2018 [Operalia's World Opera Competition](#). Maestro Domingo conducted a brief performance of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" sang by a powerful chorus of 40 rising opera stars coming from 22 different countries in and beyond the European continent.

"It made me very happy to see the creativity and passion put into so many different contributions to our #Ode2Joy Challenge during the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018. From renowned artists, choral ensembles and orchestras, to enthusiastic citizens of all ages, all were inspiring and sometimes very funny. Above all, they communicated something we have in common: a belief in our shared values and a love for our shared cultural heritage," said Plácido Domingo.

Since 9 May 2018, over 130 contributions to the #Ode2Joy Challenge have been filmed at heritage sites and shared online from over 25 countries across Europe and beyond (e.g. by Maltese Tenor [Joseph Calleja](#), Portuguese Fado singer [Katia Guerreiro](#), the [RTÉ Philharmonic Choir](#), or the [European Union Youth Orchestra](#) as well as by civil society organisations, such as [ERIH](#) (European Route of Industrial Heritage), [E-FAITH](#) (European Federation of Associations of Industrial and Technical Heritage), or the [European Historic Houses Association](#).

The relaunch of the #Ode2Joy Challenge was announced on the occasion of the "[Civil Society for rEUnaissance](#)" event organised one week ago in Brussels by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and its President **Luca Jahier**. During the musical intermezzo, a most creative #Ode2Joy Challenge contribution by "[Euphonia](#)" was for the first time performed live by Valentina Volpe Andreazza and her team of creative artists from Milan (Italy).

The Presidents of the European Commission, **Jean-Claude Juncker**, and the European Committee of the Regions, **Karl-Heinz Lambertz**, took part in this EESC event, as well as numerous representatives from European Movements and Civil Society Organisations.

Europa Nostra's Secretary General **Sneska Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic** was one of the six inspirational speakers at the event, the only one coming from the wider field of culture. On this occasion, she stated: *"At a time when Europe is facing important societal and political challenges, let's not forget that Europe is first and foremost a project of peace and a project of culture, a community of citizens with a shared cultural heritage! For us, Beethoven's and Schiller's Ode to Joy is both a symbol and an inspiration for the necessary mobilisation of citizens for the future of Europe."*

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TO FIND OUT MORE

[Download video](#)
www.ode2joy.eu
[YouTube Playlist](#)
www.europanostra.org

Background information

About the #Ode2Joy Challenge:

The social media #Ode2Joy Challenge was officially launched by Maestro Plácido Domingo on 31 January 2018 in a [video](#) released on the occasion of the Belgian [launch event](#) of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 and related Citizens Dialogue in Brussels. This participatory and inclusive initiative encourages citizens to embrace the European project while sustaining the momentum created by the European Year.

The #Ode2Joy Challenge will again culminate on the symbolic day of 9 May 2019. Not only this is Europe Day, but also the day when EU leaders will discuss the Future of Europe at a European Council to be hosted by the Romanian Presidency of the European Union, in the historic city of Sibiu, just two weeks before the European Elections.

For more information on how to participate in the challenge and see examples of contributions, please visit: www.ode2joy.eu

About Europa Nostra

[Europa Nostra](#) is the pan-European federation of heritage NGO's which is 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. **Plácido Domingo**, the world-renowned opera singer, is the President of the organisation. Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through the [7 Most Endangered programme](#) run in partnership with the European Investment Bank Institute. It celebrates excellence through the [European Heritage Awards / 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 actively contributed to the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#) and is dedicated to working to ensure a lasting legacy of this Year.