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**PRESS RELEASE**

**United Nations Secretary-General endorses the**

 **‘Ringing the Bells for Peace and Heritage’ initiative**

**undertaken by Europa Nostra**

Venice, 21 September 2021

The United Nations Secretary-General **António Guterres** welcomes and fully supports the **‘Ringing the Bells for Peace and Heritage’** initiative, which was undertaken today at **12:00 CET** in the entire city of Venice and in heritage sites across Europe by Europa Nostra and its partners. This symbolic initiative marks the [UN International Day of Peace](https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace) and the launch of the [European Cultural Heritage Summit 2021](https://www.europanostra.org/european-heritage-summit/) organised in Venice by Europa Nostra.

“*Today, with St Mark’s Square and all of Venice as its starting point, the bells at some of the world’s most outstanding heritage sites will proudly ring out across Europe. What a powerful and meaningful way to mark this year’s International Day of Peace, which coincides with the start of this year’s European Cultural Heritage Summit in Venice*,” conveys the United Nations Secretary-General in a written message that was read before the event by Europa Nostra’s Secretary General **Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović**.

Forty years ago, the International Day of Peace was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Twenty years ago, 21 September was officially established as an annual day of non-violence and cease-fire.

photo

The ‘Ringing the Bells for Peace and Heritage’ initiative stresses the pivotal role of peacekeeping in the safeguarding of cultural heritage and vice-versa. It is also a wake-up-call to find a sustainable future for Venice and its Lagoon, and for other endangered heritage sites in Europe and beyond.

“*Let today’s Ringing of the Bells for Peace and Heritage become a resounding call to action! We need it now, more than ever before, because we are simply running out of time. As we learn to live with a global pandemic, and as we discover alarming new evidence of the devastating effects of climate change, it is up to us to take urgent action. We need to “build back better”, so that we can achieve a more equitable future and a more sustainable world*,” advocated the United Nations Secretary-General.

“*Let the Bells Ring for Peace and Heritage - in Venice and all over Europe! Let the sound of those bells be the sound of hope, the sound of our togetherness, the sound of our solidarity and the sound of our shared determination to build a more peaceful and more humane world, by putting culture and our shared cultural heritage where they surely belong – at the very heart of our endeavor*,” emphasised António Guterres.

From the **World Heritage Site of Hattusa**, the capital of the Hittite Empire (in present-day Turkey), where the oldest known peace treaty in the world was written more than 3,000 years ago, to the **Peace Palace in The Hague** (The Netherlands), an iconic place that was recognised for being an embodiment of the values of peace and justice in Europe since 1913; from the **Mafra National Palace near Lisbon** (Portugal), a World Heritage Site that features the largest set of 18th-century carillon bells in the world, to **Oslo City Hall** (Norway), home of the annual Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony –  these are just a few heritage sites whose bells rang out today at 12:00.

The‘Ringing the Bells for Peace and Heritage’ event was livestreamed between **11:50 and 12:20 CET** from the Campanile of the San Marco Basilica and other heritage sites in Venice and across Europe via [live.europanostra.org](http://live.europanostra.org/).

The [European Cultural Heritage Summit 2021](https://www.europanostra.org/european-heritage-summit/) is taking place this week (**21 to 24 September**) in the World Heritage City of Venice. The Summit will offer a platform to celebrate excellence in cultural heritage skills and to highlight the value of cultural heritage for a sustainable and inclusive recovery of Europe.

The Venice Summit is organised by Europa Nostra with the support of the European Union as well as in collaboration with other [European and Italian partners](https://www.europanostra.org/european-heritage-summit/partners/). The Summit is held under the patronage of the European Parliament, the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the Italian Ministry of Culture.

The Summit will mobilise - through in-person and online presence - representatives of the wider heritage community from across Europe and beyond, including civil society organisations; local, regional, national and European authorities; international organisations; policy-makers at all levels; young heritage professionals, students as well as heritage volunteers and enthusiasts.

Due to the limitations imposed by the current health crisis, the Venice Summit is organised in a hybrid format, bringing together a selected and limited number of stakeholders on-site while giving the opportunity to a wider audience to engage with the event virtually, as the **main events will be livestreamed** via [live.europanostra.org](https://live.europanostra.org/eventi/european-cultural-heritage-summit-venice-2021/subscription/).

**The main events of the Summit that will be livestreamed are:**

**Tuesday, 21 September**

10.30 - 11.15 CET

**Press Conference***Livestream interpretation Italian into English*

11.50 - 12.15 CET

**“Ringing the Bells for Peace & Heritage”**

**Wednesday, 22 September**

10.00 - 12.45 | 13.30 - 15.00 CET
**“Endangered Venice & its Lagoon: How to Build Back Better?”***Simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Italian*

18.30 - 20.00 CET

**HIGH-QUALITY BAUKULTUR! A high-level Debate on Baukultur***Simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Italian*

**Thursday, 23 September**

17.00 - 19.00 CET

**European Heritage Awards Ceremony 2021**
*Simultaneous interpretation in English and Italian*

**Friday, 24 September**

09.30 - 13.15 | 14.15 - 16.30 CET
**European Heritage Policy Agora “From the New European Bauhaus to the New European Renaissance”**

*Simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Italian*

For a short description about the main events of the Summit and the related detailed programmes, please visit

[www.europanostra.org/european-heritage-summit](http://www.europanostra.org/european-heritage-summit)

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**Background**

**Europa Nostra**

[Europa Nostra](https://www.europanostra.org/) is the European voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting cultural and natural heritage. A pan-European federation of heritage NGOs, supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals, it covers more than 40 countries. Founded in 1963, it is today recognised as the largest and 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](http://7mostendangered.eu/) Programme. Europa Nostra actively contributes to the definition and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage, through a participatory dialogue with European Institutions and the coordination of the [European Heritage Alliance](https://europeanheritagealliance.eu/). Europa Nostra was the EU's key civil society partner during the [European Year of Cultural Heritage](https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/about_en.html) in 2018. It also figures among the first official partners of the [New European Bauhaus](https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en) initiative recently launched by the European Commission.