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**PRESS RELEASE**

**European Heritage Awards Ceremony 2023 in Venice:**

**5 Grand Prix and Public Choice Award unveiled**

*Venice, 28 September 2023*

The winners of the **European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2023**, Europe’s top honour in the field, were celebrated this evening with a high-level event held at the iconic *Palazzo del Cinema* at the Lido in Venice. This year’s European Heritage Awards Ceremony was held in the presence of **Cecilia Bartoli**, the world-renowned mezzo-soprano who is the President of Europa Nostra. **Margaritis Schinas**, European Commission Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, addressed the audience of some 700 people live from Brussels. **Roberta Metsola**, President of the European Parliament, congratulated the winners through a video message. The ceremony was the largest event of the European Cultural Heritage Summit 2023, which is taking place on 27-30 September in the World Heritage City of Venice. The ceremony was jointly organised by Europa Nostra and the European Commission in partnership with the City of Venice.

During the ceremony, the **five laureates of the Grand Prix** and the winner of the **Public Choice Award** were announced. These top winners wereselected from among this year’s [28 award-winning heritage achievements from 20 European countries](https://www.europanostra.org/2023-winners-of-europe-top-heritage-awards-announced-by-the-european-commission-and-europa-nostra/) by the [Board of Europa Nostra](https://www.europanostra.org/about-us/governance/board/) on recommendation by an independent [jury of experts](http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/jury/).

**Cecilia Bartoli**, President of Europa Nostra, stated*:* *“What a joy for me to be in Venice for this evening of celebration of the winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2023. Every year, our award winners bring hope and inspiration to us all. The variety in terms of content and geographical range of their projects, their scope and individual nature perfectly reflect the richness and diversity of our culture. And the people who devote their hearts and energy to these projects are compelling ambassadors of how to safeguard, restore and enhance Europe’s cultural heritage. My heartfelt congratulations to all the winners, particularly to the laureates of the Grand Prix and the winner of the Public Choice Award”.*

**FIVE GRAND PRIX FOR 2023**

The **five laureates of the Grand Prix** - which receive a **monetary award of €10,000 each** - are:

[Royal Gardens of Venice, ITALY](https://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/winners/royal-gardens-of-venice/)

Grand Prix laureate in category **Conservation & Adaptive Reuse**

Today, when the World Heritage City of Venice is facing many challenges and threats, the sensitive restoration of these Napoleonic-era gardens stands out as a shining example of how to care for the city’s heritage in a way that accurately responds to its most pressing needs. Special considerations of the current climate crisis have been woven into the design of the interventions, making this initiative an inspiring example for any city that suffers from the effects of climate change.

[Deba Bridge,](https://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/winners/deba-bridge) [Gipuzkoa, SPAIN](https://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/winners/deba-bridge)

Grand Prix laureate in category **Conservation & Adaptive Reuse**

The complex rehabilitation of this 19th-century stone bridge presented a very difficult technical challenge. The conservation team carried out careful research to preserve the integrity of the bridge, showing a remarkable sense of responsibility in keeping the authenticity of the construction. The intervention uncovered new knowledge to complete the project and sets a standard for future, similar projects.

[ACTA VISTA, Marseille, FRANCE](https://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/winners/acta-vista)

Grand Prix laureate in category **Education, Training & Skills**

ACTA VISTA is a persuasive example of how cultural heritage can empower people who have been excluded from employment in an impactful way. It demonstrates that the restoration of heritage can serve as a pathway for radical inclusion, and that heritage has a regenerative capacity.

[Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI), Dublin, IRELAND](https://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/winners/museum-of-literature-ireland-moli)

Grand Prix laureate in category **Citizens’ Engagement & Awareness-raising**

The Museum of Literature Ireland is remarkable in its success in reaching out to lovers of literature and non-traditional audiences alike and in raising awareness of Ireland’s rich literary heritage. Through an exceptional programme of events, MoLI has attracted and maintained a diverse, multigenerational audience, also thanks to the potentials offered by digital transformation.

[Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Online (SUCHO), UKRAINE/INTERNATIONAL PROJECT](https://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/winners/saving-ukrainian-cultural-heritage-online-sucho)

Grand Prix laureate in category **Heritage Champions**

This large network of international volunteers, mobilised by a group of leading heritage professionals, rapidly reacted to the threats to heritage generated by Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine and began their work in the first days of the war. Using existing digital tools, these volunteers have helped ensure that a huge amount of Ukrainian heritage assets could be safeguarded. They have also made significant efforts to digitise at-risk collections.

**WINNER OF THE PUBLIC CHOICE AWARD FOR 2023**

The **Public Choice Award 2023** - which also includes **a monetary award of €10,000** - went to [Via Transilvanica, ROMANIA](https://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/winners/via-transilvanica), a remarkable project that established Romania’s longest hiking trail, spanning over 1,400 kilometres and connecting 12 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. This impressive initiative in the category Citizens’ Engagement & Awareness-raising raised the largest number of votes, cast via an online poll with the participation of some **27,000 citizens** from all over Europe. Daniel Toda, a voter from Romania, wrote: “*Via Transilvanica is truly a magnificent project encompassing outstanding nature, trails and cultural heritage. This is the adventure of a lifetime, literally a time-travel to old Europe, to villages trapped in time, monasteries and medieval castles. Via Transilvanica is a golden string that ties all these pearls into an amazing experience”*.

**MESSAGES BY KEY EU PERSONALITIES**

In his live address from Brussels, **Margaritis Schinas**, European Commission Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, said: *“I’m delighted to celebrate the winners of the 2023 European Heritage Awards. Tonight brings us together to recognise best practices in the conservation of Europe’s rich, though sometimes fragile, cultural heritage. Protecting and promoting Europe’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage is a collective task for all Europeans. We are proud of our past. We shall ensure it remains a universal ‘trésor’ for everyone to enjoy.”*

In a video message, **Roberta Metsola**, President of the European Parliament, affirmed: “*I have huge appreciation for the exceptional quality of heritage projects and champions which the European Union and Europa Nostra are celebrating this year in Venice. Your achievements demonstrate that culture and heritage can play a part in improving both environmental sustainability and social cohesion.”*

In a congratulatory message, **Iliana Ivanova**, newly appointed Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, stated: *“I warmly congratulate the winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2023 for their outstanding achievements. Their passionate work vividly showcases the value of heritage for Europe. Our cultural heritage strengthens our economy, contributes to build a sense of belonging, and benefits our citizens by improving the quality and beauty of their daily lives.”*

**ABOUT THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE AWARDS CEREMONY & THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL HERITAGE SUMMIT 2023**

For the European Heritage Awards Ceremony 2023, Europa Nostra partnered with [ACE - Association des Cinémathèques Européennes](https://ace-film.eu/) and the [European Commission’s Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/communications-networks-content-and-technology_en) (DG Connect) to highlight heritage excellence and best practices in Europe in the domain of cinema culture. The ceremony featured extracts from significant film restoration projects, such as a compilation of Georges Méliès’ short films (1904-1906) and “The Clowns” (1970) by Federico Fellini, which were projected during the intermezzos and as a celebratory conclusion to the event. Two of the film excerpts were accompanied by live music, performed by a violin quartet of the [European Union Youth Orchestra](https://euyo.eu/) (EUYO). The restored films were presented in the framework of the EU-funded programme, [A Season of Classic Films](https://ace-film.eu/projects/season-of-classics/).

The ceremony was the largest event of the [European Cultural Heritage Summit 2023](https://www.europanostra.org/european-heritage-summit/) organised by [Europa Nostra](https://www.europanostra.org/) in partnership with the [European Commission](https://commission.europa.eu/index_en) and with the support of the[Creative Europe](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/index_en.htm)programme of the European Union. Coinciding with Europa Nostra’s 60th Anniversary, the 2023 Summit is being held on 27-30 September in the World Heritage City of Venice. The choice of Venice has a highly symbolic value. The European history and significance of this historic city, combined with its breath-taking yet fragile beauty, has always been at the very heart of the mission of Europa Nostra.

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**Background**

**European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards**

The [European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards](http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/) were launched by the European Commission in 2002 and have been run by Europa Nostra ever since. The Awards scheme has the support of the [Creative Europe](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/index_en.htm) programme of the European Union. For 21 years, the Awards have highlighted and disseminated heritage excellence and best practices, encouraged the cross-border exchange of knowledge and connected heritage stakeholders in wider networks. The Awards have brought major benefits to the winners, such as greater (inter)national exposure, follow-on funding and increased visitor numbers. In addition, the Awards have fostered greater care for our shared heritage amongst Europe’s citizens. The Awards have therefore been a key tool to promote the multiple values of cultural and natural heritage for Europe’s society, economy and environment. For additional facts and figures about the Awards, please visit [www.europeanheritageawards.eu/facts-figures](http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/facts-figures).

**Europa Nostra**

[Europa Nostra](https://www.europanostra.org/) is the European voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting cultural and natural heritage. It is a pan-European federation of heritage NGOs, supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals, covering over 40 countries. It is the largest and the most representative heritage network in Europe, maintaining close relations with the European Union, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and other international bodies. Founded in 1963, Europa Nostra celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe’s endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through the [7 Most Endangered Programme](http://7mostendangered.eu/about/). It celebrates and disseminates excellence through the [European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards](http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/). 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](http://europeanheritagealliance.eu/).

Since 1 May 2023, Europa Nostra has led the European consortium selected by the European Commission to run the [European Heritage Hub](https://www.europanostra.org/europa-nostra-and-its-partners-selected-to-implement-eu-funded-pilot-project-european-heritage-hub/) pilot project. Europa Nostra is also an official partner of the [New European Bauhaus](https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en) initiative developed by the European Commission, and is the Regional Co-Chair for Europe of the [Climate Heritage Network](https://climateheritage.org/).

**Creative Europe**

[Creative Europe](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/index_en.htm) is the EU programme that supports the cultural and creative sectors, enabling them to increase their contribution to Europe’s society, economy and living environment. With a budget of €2.4 billion for 2021-2027, 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