

BUCHAREST MANIFESTO FOR QUALITY-DRIVEN CULTURAL HERITAGE PRACTICE IN EUROPE



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November 2024

We, the civil society actors committed to culture and cultural heritage at all levels, from local to international,

Representing hundreds of organisations and thousands of individuals across Europe and beyond,
Gathered in Bucharest from 6 to 8 October 2024 for the [European Cultural Heritage Summit](#) to advocate for the political, environmental, and societal value of cultural heritage in Europe,

Recognising that the concept of “Quality” requires better definition and adaptation to underpin all heritage actions, from policymaking to on-the-ground interventions,

Noting with concern the persistence of outdated, business-as-usual approaches to cultural heritage across Europe, which fail to meet today’s imperative Quality requirements and standards, despite often being supported by national or EU public funding,

Acknowledging the urgent need for Quality-driven cultural heritage practices that incorporate recognition of layered and diverse values, stakeholders’ inclusivity, outright responses to climate change, and the effective integration of technical advancements, including digital innovation,

Hearing the call of Romanian cultural heritage professionals for a Quality-based cultural heritage practice, as articulated in the [Manifesto for Heritage Protection in Romania](#), following the Round Table Discussion “Expectations of Romanian Cultural Heritage Civil Society from Public Authorities and Government”, held in anticipation of the European Cultural Heritage Summit,

Recalling key initiatives, such as:

- the [European Quality Principles for EU-funded Interventions with Potential Impact upon Cultural Heritage](#) (developed by an expert group assembled by ICOMOS, under the mandate of the European Commission in the framework of the “Cherishing Heritage” flagship EU Initiative of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018),
- the 2019 conference [European Heritage: shared experience, regional specificities](#) (organised under the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU), stressing the need to adhere to and apply extensive and adapted Quality tools in cultural heritage practice across Europe,
- broader Quality frameworks like the [Davos Baukultur Quality System](#), and the [New European Bauhaus Compass](#), which integrate cultural heritage into a holistic vision of Quality for the built environment,

Commending the work that Europa Nostra has delivered since 2002 in respect of Quality principles through the [European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards](#) celebrating excellence in heritage conservation and community engagement,



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Saluting the achievements of the EU-funded projects [European Heritage Hub](#) and [European Cultural Heritage Agora](#) supporting the cultural and heritage ecosystems to thrive, be more resilient, innovative and diverse,

Recognising additional relevant EU frameworks and instruments addressing urgent needs, such as risk preparedness (EUCPM), energy efficiency (EPBD), protection of the natural environment and ecosystems (Nature Restoration Law),

In line with previous appeals made at the European Cultural Heritage Summits in [Berlin](#), [Paris](#), [Prague](#) and [Venice](#),

We firmly call upon all European leaders, recently elected Members of the European Parliament, and designated members of the new European Commission for the 2024-2029 term, upon all national political leaders, many of them recently elected or re-elected, and upon all cultural and heritage actors at all operational levels to:

1. Refine and extend the concept of Quality in Cultural Heritage

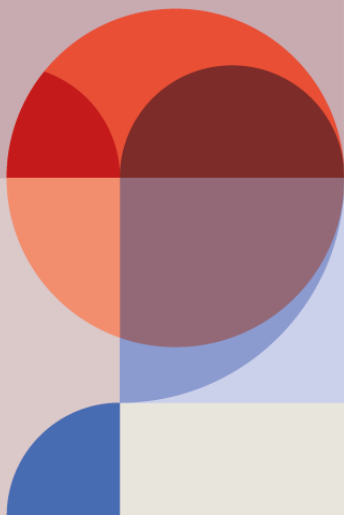
- Integrate existing frameworks and approaches into a synergic and comprehensive Quality-driven system for heritage policy and practice, addressing current crises - social, ecological and environmental, including adaptation, mitigation and risk preparedness.

2. Integrate Quality in Policy and Practice at all Levels

- Apply this redefined Quality concept across the entire cultural heritage ecosystem - from EU and national programming, to professional and community action - ensuring intersectionality across policy areas.
- Situate Quality centrally as the key theme of the Culture Compass, the EU's overarching cultural policy plan, to ensure high standards in governance, project and programme management.
- Place Quality as a core objective in EU funding, both at the mid-term revision of current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), and in the planning of the forthcoming MFF, and ensure its transfer into national frameworks and programmes.

3. Make Cultural Heritage a Key Component of Climate Action

- Implement measures to protect heritage from climate change impacts, while leveraging heritage as a source of traditional, adaptive, and innovative solutions for climate-related challenges.



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4. Incorporate Cultural Heritage in Risk Management Systems

- Bring the concern for cultural heritage protection into risk preparedness, mitigation and emergency response, by mainstreaming methodologies (e.g. PROCULTHER, ICCROM First Aid Kit etc) across Europe, and integrating civil protection forces, heritage professionals, and local communities into disaster preparedness and emergency response frameworks.
- Assist local stakeholders in war-torn areas to assess the risks and document damage to cultural heritage, implement stabilisation, and conduct early recovery measures with Quality as the central operating framework of the work, always sharing expertise and providing training and guidance on the ground, where needs arise, following the example of Heritage Emergency Response Initiative in Ukraine and other citizens-led activities.

5. Recognise Traditional Knowledge and Practices as Quality Enablers

- Ensure the inclusion of traditional skills, materials, techniques, and their practitioners in national construction and procurement frameworks, granting them rightful recognition, accessibility, and legal support, to be used in heritage interventions.

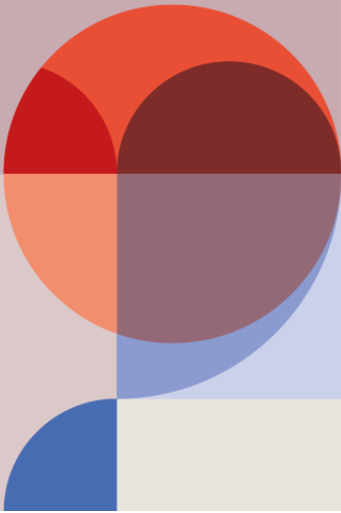
6. Embed Quality Principles and Criteria in Public Procurement

- Align EU and national public procurement systems with Quality principles, making all the necessary improvements at the legal, administrative and procedural levels.
- Integrate clear and effective cultural heritage Quality criteria in all procurement and tendering procedures.

7. Build Sectoral Capacity for the Quality Transition

- Adapt existing education and training programmes and create new ones to enable and sustain the Quality transition, and invest in upskilling and reskilling the workforce.
- Support younger generations in entering the heritage professions by establishing mechanisms for civil society organisations, businesses, and public institutions to sustain workforce development, including fostering digital skills and quality-driven expertise.
- Increase the system's professional and administrative capacity - human resources - to address heritage challenges effectively.

This Manifesto serves as a collective call to action, urging stakeholders to prioritise Quality, as defined herein, as the cornerstone of cultural heritage policy and practice. By committing to these principles, we can ensure that cultural heritage remains authentic and resilient, preserving its value for society throughout Europe.



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As part of Europa Nostra's mission to safeguard our built and natural heritage, the Bucharest Manifesto was produced exclusively in digital format.

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