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## Heritage Fund for the restoration of Ukrainian monuments

Over the next ten years, Ukraine's total restoration needs in the cultural sector are estimated at nearly \$9 billion. At the Conference on the Protection of Ukrainian Cultural Heritage in Times of War, Ministers of Culture and delegations from European countries, the EU and Unesco expressed their support for the efforts of the country, which has been severely affected by the ongoing war.

Ukraine, together with many partner countries, will establish the Ukrainian Heritage Fund to restore monuments damaged by the ongoing war, protect the country's museums and collections, and promote cultural development. This was announced by the Minister of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine, Mykola Tochytskyi, at the first international conference "Cooperation for Resilience".

The [Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine](#), with the support of UNESCO, organised the conference on the Protection of Ukrainian Cultural Heritage in Times of War. The conference, held in Uzhhorod, brought together delegations from 28 partner countries, as well as representatives of the European Commission and UNESCO, including 18 at ministerial and deputy ministerial level.

As Mykola Tochytskyi stated "a practical result of the

conference was the adoption of the Declaration on Strengthening the Resilience of Ukraine's Cultural Sector. The declaration outlines several coordinated efforts between Ukraine and international partners to preserve and protect cultural heritage and rebuild cultural infrastructure. It also introduces the idea of creating the Ukrainian Heritage Fund, which will play a key role in financing and supporting the restoration of museums, the conservation of cultural monuments, and the overall development of Ukraine's culture". Thirteen countries have signed the Declaration so far, and it remains open for signature.

Just one day before the meeting of culture ministers and delegations in Uzhhorod, Russia fired ballistic missiles at the historic centre of Odessa, causing damage to UNESCO-listed sites.

The Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine reported that by the end of January 2025, 1,333 cultural heritage sites and 2,185 cultural infrastructure facilities had been damaged by Russian aggression.

"Regretfully, there hasn't been a month without an increase in these statistics, and they are expected to keep rising. For example, the recent shelling of Odesa resulted in damage to 26 objects in the historical center as of February 1, and assessment work is still ongoing. said Galyna Grygorenko, First Deputy Minister of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine.

According to RDNA3 data from the end of 2023, total losses in the culture and tourism sector are estimated at nearly \$20 billion. Over the next ten years, the total restoration needs, including services and rebuilding, are projected to be almost \$9 billion. This issue extends beyond buildings to include movable cultural property, museum collections, and the restoration of creative and cultural industries.

Galyna Grygorenko, noted that the primary needs from 2022 to 2024 include packaging materials, transportation for monument evacuation, stabilization of damaged sites, storage and equipment for shelters in cultural institutions, and preservation equipment such as generators.

Glenn Micallef, EU Commissioner for Intergenerational Justice, Youth, Culture, and Sport, who led the European Commission delegation, reaffirmed the EU's unwavering support. "The European Commission will support Ukraine for as long as necessary" Micallef said. "Ukraine's future is in the European Union. Ukraine is Europe" he added.

Krista Pikkat, Director for Culture and Emergencies Entity in the Culture Sector (CLT/CEM) at UNESCO, underscored the need to update international legal frameworks. She emphasized that Ukraine's experience has revealed significant gaps in existing regulations, highlighting the urgent need for stronger legal mechanisms, especially in times of full-scale war.

Anastasia Bondar, Deputy Minister for Digital Development, Digital Transformations and Digitalization of Ukraine stressed that culture is a key part of post-war recovery, guided by the "Genius Loci" principle and the unity of citizens around cultural identity – both crucial for resilience and national strength.

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Photo: Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine