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## Thirty Projects Win Continent's Most Prestigious Conservation Awards

# The European Commission and Europa Nostra announced on Tuesday the winners of the 2026 European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards, honouring 30 exemplary projects and champions from 18 countries across the continent.

The 2026 [European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards](#), co-funded by the [Creative Europe Programme](#) of the European Union, span five categories: Conservation & Adaptive Reuse, Research, Education, Training & Skills, Citizens' Engagement & Awareness-raising, and Heritage Champions.

The winners [were selected by an awards jury](#) composed of [ten heritage experts](#) from across Europe, upon [evaluation of all applications](#) by [five selection committees](#). A total of 261 eligible applications were submitted by organisations and individuals from 40 European countries.

This year's cohort reflects a breadth of approaches to preserving the continent's material and intangible past. Among the highlights are the DumBO project, which reactivated a 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> former railway yard in Bologna through minimal, reversible interventions, creating a flexible cultural hub with strong community impact on a modest budget; the Cypriot Fiddler research project, which documented the life stories of traditional Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot musicians through long-term fieldwork, a documentary, a book and an open-access website; and the "Pacijenca" programme, which revived, through hands-on training, the nearly extinct Dobrota lace tradition in Montenegro.

Other recognised projects include the Gardens of Peace Project, which created contemporary public gardens along the First World War front line in France and Belgium, inviting reflection and dialogue on Europe's shared history of conflict, and the volunteer-driven organisation Din l-Art Helwa, which has

protected Malta's heritage through restoration, advocacy and public engagement for over 40 years.

In the Research category, the FENIX project in Seville develops AI-supported tools and open satellite-based risk analysis to help cultural heritage institutions prepare for natural and human-made disasters — an increasingly pressing concern as extreme weather events multiply across Europe.

The winners will be honoured at the European Heritage Awards Ceremony 2026 on the evening of 28 May at the Municipal Theatre of Nicosia, co-hosted by Glenn Micallef, European Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport, and Prof. Dr Hermann Parzinger, Executive President of Europa Nostra, in the presence of the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nikos Christodoulides. Europa Nostra Cyprus currently holds the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

During the ceremony, the Grand Prix laureates and the Public Choice Award winner — chosen from among this year's winners and each entitled to receive €10,000 — will be announced. The ceremony will be live-streamed via the Europa Nostra website.

The event will include a musical programme featuring live performances by Cypriot singer and songwriter Vakia Stavrou, pianist Manolis Neophytou, soprano Mariza Anastasiadou, and members of the Cyprus Youth Symphony Orchestra.

The ceremony falls within the broader [European Cultural Heritage Summit 2026](#), taking place from 26 to 30 May in Nicosia under the motto "Heritage as the Soul of Mare Nostrum", highlighting the geopolitical, societal and environmental relevance of heritage for Europe and the wider Mediterranean region. The Summit is held under the [patronage of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU](#).

The awards honour up to 30 outstanding heritage achievements each year, among which up to five Grand Prix are selected. Each Grand Prix winner receives a monetary prize of €10,000. The Public Choice Award, also worth €10,000, is presented to one of the selected winners following an online vote conducted by Europa Nostra. European Heritage Awards: Votes for the Public Choice Award can be cast until 12 May at [vote.europanostra.org](https://vote.europanostra.org)

## Background

Launched in 2002 by the European Commission and managed by Europa Nostra since, the Awards mark their 23rd

anniversary in 2026. News Directory 3 The scheme has deeper roots: Europa Nostra established its own awards programme in 1978, presenting recognition to some 650 exemplary projects until 2001, before the scheme was relaunched with backing from the European Commission the following year. Since 2002, independent expert juries have selected almost 600 award-winning projects from 34 countries.

Commissioner Glenn Micallef, said the 2026 winners demonstrated that heritage was "not just about the past" but "a living force for progress". Cecilia Bartoli, the mezzo-soprano and President of Europa Nostra, struck a more sombre note, observing that in a world marked by conflicts, geopolitical tensions and technological change, "the need to champion what unites us has become more urgent and important than ever."