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UNESCO Director-General in Lviv to strengthen support for culture

UNESCO chief launches \$1.7m cultural hub in Lviv, Ukraine, alongside new heritage protection initiatives, as part of the organisation's ongoing support for Ukrainian culture during wartime

UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay visited Lviv, Ukraine on Sunday to launch new initiatives supporting the country's cultural sector, nearly three years after the start of the war.

The centrepiece is the new Lviv Culture Hub, funded by Spain with \$1.7m, which will serve as a training centre and meeting place for artists across Ukraine. The facility, housed in a restored historic building, will also provide art therapy programmes for war victims.

During her visit, Azoulay announced two additional projects:

A €2.2m EU-backed programme to preserve Ukraine's Jewish documentary heritage, involving 50 professionals across 10 cultural institutions

A restoration project for over 300 works by Ukrainian women artists, including training for 80 professionals

"Lviv is a historically multicultural city, the heir to many influences and a jewel of Ukrainian architecture. Even before the war, it was one of the country's cultural capitals, and boasted an extraordinarily rich artistic scene. For the past three years, it also became a city of refuge for artists from all over Ukraine, which is why UNESCO is mobilizing substantial resources here" Azoulay said in a statement.

UNESCO has mobilised \$74m for Ukraine since February 2022, supporting culture, education and information initiatives. The organisation's Kyiv office, opened in September 2022, now employs more than 35 experts working on projects including damage assessment, museum protection and monument restoration.

Lviv's historic centre has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1998. The city joined UNESCO's Creative Cities network as a City of Literature in 2015 and became a Learning City in 2024.

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