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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACP: Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific

ALIPH: International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas

CBF: Confidence Building Facility

CH: Cultural Heritage

CPCC: Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability

CSDP: Common Security and Defence Policy

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

CSO-LA: Civil Society Organisations – Local Authorities

EDF: European Development Fund

EEAS: European External Action Service

EIDHR: European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

EL PAcCTO: Europe-Latin America Programme of Assistance against Transnational Organised Crime

EMPACT: European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats

ENI: European Neighbourhood Instrument

EPPO: European Public Prosecutor's Office

EU: European Union

EUAM: European Union Advisory Mission

EULEX: European Union Rule of Law Mission

EUROJUST: European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation

EUTM: European Union Training Mission

FPI: European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments

ICCROM: International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property

ICOM: International Council of Museums

IfSP: Instrument for Stability and Peace

IPA: Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

MIP: Multi-annual Indicative Programme

NDICI: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument

OPLAN: Operational Plan

RDEPT: Royal Department for Environment Protection and Tourism

TAIEX: Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Executive summary

Cultural heritage plays a vital role in strengthening a sense of identity, fostering social cohesion, and boosting economic development. However, it faces significant challenges, especially in conflict zones. The European Union (EU) acknowledges the critical role of cultural heritage in peacebuilding and is actively involved in its global protection and promotion.

In response to the destruction of cultural heritage in Ukraine due to Russia's war of aggression, since March 2022, the EU has made available funding, provided emergency protection for cultural heritage, and supported the training of cultural heritage first aiders. It has also organised conferences to address cultural heritage crimes and support Ukrainian authorities to implement legal strategies to hold perpetrators accountable. Medium- and long-term plans are in place for the reconstruction and restoration of Ukrainian cultural heritage.

The EU is further integrating cultural heritage protection into its common security and defence policy (CSDP), incorporating it into mission actions across multiple regions. Training programmes have been set up to equip personnel with the necessary skills to address cultural heritage-related challenges, in particular those in conflict zones.

The EU is also proactively combating the illicit trafficking of cultural property, which poses significant security risks to the EU, and beyond. The EU action plan against trafficking in cultural goods aims to step up international cooperation, strengthen legislation, and raise awareness to prevent these crimes globally.

Sustainability is a core aspect of the EU's approach to cultural heritage. By supporting projects that promote both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, empower communities, and foster social cohesion, the EU ensures that cultural heritage continues to be a force for unity and progress. EU-funded initiatives across various regions are helping to preserve and promote cultural heritage while contributing to sustainable development.

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Looking forward, the work of the EU faces challenges such as financial constraints, capacity gaps, and weak legal frameworks in cultural heritage preservation. Nonetheless, these challenges also present opportunities for international collaboration, capacity building, and the development of economic and disaster-risk-reduction strategies. By addressing these challenges and leveraging available opportunities, the EU aims to ensure that cultural heritage continues to play a crucial role in promoting and supporting peace and security worldwide.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is a powerful force for peace. It can act as a unifying force, fostering identities, social cohesion, and economic development. However, it can also become a potential driver of conflict as disputes over cultural identity and heritage can exacerbate tensions. Cultural heritage faces significant challenges, including ongoing conflicts, illicit traffic in cultural property, the impact of climate change, neglect, and insufficient resources. The EU plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges and supporting action to preserve cultural heritage. Recognising the potential of cultural heritage to foster peace, the EU actively supports cultural initiatives worldwide, with a particular focus on Ukraine, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and Africa.

Divided societies can find common ground through their shared cultural heritage, which offers opportunities for reconciliation. The EU supports peacebuilding efforts, leveraging cultural heritage to promote harmony between different groups (for example, projects in Mali, Moldova, Tanzania and Timor-Leste have a strong focus on this). In conflict zones, the EU supports countries' post-conflict rehabilitation and helps preserve cultural heritage affected by hostilities (for example in Iraq, Ukraine and Yemen) and vulnerable to criminal exploitation. The EU also supports source and transit countries outside the EU in tackling organised crime networks engaged in trafficking of cultural property.

Preserving cultural heritage goes beyond safeguarding the past; it is a long-term strategy for fostering peace and development, ultimately leading to a more secure future.

In line with the 2021 Council Conclusions¹, this report aims to inform on the progress made in implementing the measures proposed and the main aspects set out in the Concept on cultural heritage in conflicts and crises. The analysis cover the period May 2023 – May 2024.

As the world commemorates the 70th anniversary of the Hague Convention, the EU continues to advocate the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, reaffirming its role as a champion of peace and resilience in a complex global landscape.

¹ Council Conclusions on EU Approach to Cultural Heritage in conflicts and crises ([9837/21](#)).

2. EU SUPPORT FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN UKRAINE

More than a decade has passed since the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, and over 2 years since Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. The war still rages on, and beyond the tens of thousands of innocent victims², the hostilities continue to damage also Ukrainian cultural heritage. UNESCO verified damage to 457 sites between 24 February 2022 and 6 October 2024. This includes 143 religious sites, 231 buildings of historical and/or artistic interest, 32 museums, 33 monuments, 17 libraries, and 1 archive³.

According to the third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment carried out by the World Bank in coordination with the EU, the United Nations, and the Ukrainian government, as of 31 December 2023, the total cost of damage in the culture and tourism sector was estimated at USD 3.5 billion. This includes: (i) damage to buildings, historic cities, and sites of cultural/social significance (USD 2.41 billion); (ii) movable cultural properties, collections, and repositories of culture (USD 161 million); (iii) buildings/workshops/ateliers dedicated to cultural and creative industries (USD 262 million); and (iv) tourism facilities (USD 650 million)⁴.

In response, the EU has mobilised various funding instruments as part of its integrated approach to external conflicts and crises. These funds provided immediate support for the physical

² According to its latest report, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine has verified 30 457 civilian casualties since 24 February 2022 – comprising 10 582 killed and 19 875 injured, with the actual numbers likely to be significantly higher (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/ukraine-turk-deplores-horrific-human-cost-russias-full-scale-invasion-enters>).

³ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/damaged-cultural-sites-ukraine-verified-unesco>.

⁴ UKRAINE Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA3), February 2022 – December 2023, © February 2024, the World Bank, the Government of Ukraine, the European Union, the United Nations. <https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/UA%20RDNA3%20report%20EN.pdf>.

protection of tangible cultural heritage and continuous support for Ukraine's cultural and creative sectors.

From 15 March 2022 to 15 September 2023, the EU supported the 'Acting to Preserve Ukrainian Heritage' project, implemented by the ALIPH Foundation. The project aimed to (i) provide emergency protection materials and equipment for the protection of monuments, buildings and collections; (ii) support 3D documentation, emergency inventory, storage, and, where needed, the in-country evacuation of cultural property; and (iii) support Ukrainian cultural heritage professionals. The programme allowed 56 ALIPH projects to support 164 cultural heritage institutions:

- 98 museums, 14 libraries and 7 archives were provided with equipment and material for packaging and security measures;
- 8 major storage facilities were upgraded to host evacuated collections on the territory of Ukraine to prevent the stored works from being damaged, especially by humidity, in the winter period;
- 4 mobile laboratories (vehicle and emergency conservation equipment) were provided for emergency restoration and conservation;
- emergency conservation equipment and restoration materials were provided to the main office of the National Research and Restoration Center of Ukraine in Kyiv and its branches in Kharkiv, Lviv and Odesa, as well as to the State Center for Conservation of Documents of the National Archival Fund in Kyiv; and
- 26 historical sites (historical buildings, churches, cultural historical reserves) were supported through emergency 3D documentation and physical emergency protection.

Furthermore, financial support was provided to 349 cultural heritage professionals whose wages had been cut or suspended due to the war, enabling them to continue their work under emergency conditions in Ukraine. Of these, 72% were women and 28% were men. Due to the project's success, it has been extended until 2025.

In late 2023, the European Commission awarded a grant under its Creative Europe programme to the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural

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Property (ICCROM) to strengthen capacity building for Ukrainian cultural heritage professionals. This enabled ICCROM's First Aid and Resilience for Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis programme to train 23 heritage professionals from 11 oblasts, creating a team of Ukrainian cultural first aiders, ready to recover and safeguard the nation's invaluable heritage amid the ongoing war.

The European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine organised a high-level conference in Lviv in May 2023 to address crimes against Ukrainian cultural heritage, followed by the 'United for Justice. United for Heritage' conference in Kyiv in February 2024, focusing on legal challenges and prosecution of these crimes. Additionally, the EUAM launched workshops throughout 2024 to train local stakeholders on investigating and prosecuting cultural heritage crimes. See Annex 1 for more details about EUAM Ukraine's activities.

Additionally, in its 14th sanctions package (24 June 2024), the EU Council prohibited the purchase, import, transfer or export of Ukrainian cultural property goods and other goods of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific or religious importance, and related goods, if there is reasonable suspicion that they have been unlawfully removed from Ukraine⁵.

Simultaneously, the EU is focusing on medium- and long-term measures for the reconstruction, restoration or revitalisation of Ukraine's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Based on the EU Work Plan for Culture for 2023-2026⁶, the Commission set up an expert sub-group on safeguarding cultural heritage in Ukraine. This group, composed of 26 experts (including six Ukrainians), focused on sharing experiences and good practice related to damage prevention, preparedness and recovery of Ukrainian cultural heritage. The expert sub-group met on 22-23 January 2024 and 17-18 June 2024 (in person in Brussels). These meetings followed the sub-group's previous gatherings in June (online) and September (in person) 2023. During the

⁵ [Council Decision \(CFSP\) 2024/1744 of 24 June 2024](#) amending Decision [2014/512/CFSP](#) concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine and [Council Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1745 of 24 June 2024](#) amending [Regulation \(EU\) No 833/2014](#) concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine.

⁶ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2022_466_R_0001.

meetings, the experts drafted policy recommendations in the following priority areas: (i) recognition of cultural heritage; (ii) risk management and preparedness; (iii) documentation, monitoring, and data collection; and (iv) recovery of cultural heritage. The recommendations have been finalised and released publicly on 25 November 2024.

Additionally, several projects supported by the EU are currently running in Ukraine, including **House of Europe II**, led by the Goethe-Institut and funded by the EU, which promotes an inclusive and resilient society through professional exchanges, cultural showcasing, policy integration, and support for national minorities. Another project, the Crisis Inventory and Leap to Digitalisation of Museum Registers, implemented by the Lviv regional public organisation Tustan, focuses on digitalising museum registers to protect cultural heritage during the war. ALIPH Foundation's **Acting to Preserve Ukrainian Heritage II** is an extension of the already cited homonymous project. Lastly, **U-RE-HERIT: Architects for Heritage in Ukraine** by the Architects Association of Lithuania and financially supported by the Creative Europe programme is preparing for post-war recovery by preserving urban and architectural heritage through interdisciplinary collaboration⁷.

Beyond cultural heritage, the EU is working in support of the broader culture, art and creative sectors in Ukraine. Details of this work can be found in the brochure [Supporting Ukraine's arts and culture](#), published by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, and compiling actions funded under the Creative Europe programme as well as the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe.

In addition, two EUR 5 million calls were launched under Creative Europe in November 2022 and November 2024 to (1) support Ukrainian artists and cultural organisations, (2) foster access to culture and cultural heritage for displaced people, and (3) prepare the post-war recovery of the Ukrainian cultural and creative sectors. The EU also organised a series of events to understand the future needs of the Ukrainian cultural sector and identify the best way to move forward in its support, with the support of the EU-funded Cultural Relations Platform. The final

⁷ See Annex 2 for further data on these projects.

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report was published in July 2024. These initiatives address all cultural and creative sectors, including cultural heritage.

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3. CULTURAL HERITAGE AS PART OF THE CSDP

Since 2021, the topic of cultural heritage has been integrated into the political framework of the EU's common security and defence policy (CSDP). The Strategic Compass for Security and Defence reiterates that the EU 'will ... continue to contribute to the protection of cultural heritage, including through our CSDP missions and operations', and the 2023 Civilian CSDP Compact highlights the need to consider actions to preserve and protect cultural heritage⁸. In addition, the dedicated mini-concept for civilian CSDP missions offers guidance on addressing security challenges related to the preservation and protection of cultural heritage⁹.

Tasks related to cultural heritage can be performed within the existing mandates and operational plans of CSDP missions, without specific references. As such, several civilian missions (e.g. EUAM Iraq, EUAM Ukraine, EULEX Kosovo¹⁰) help host states strengthen their capacity to preserve and protect cultural heritage; others are either performing different activities in line with their mandate (e.g. monitoring) or analysing the feasibility of measures in line with the concept.

The EU has also incorporated cultural heritage into conflict analyses and in the EU policy on training for the CSDP¹¹. In this regard, the topic of cultural heritage protection has become part of the pre-deployment training organised by the European Security and Defence College for the CSDP, and dedicated training sessions are currently included in the joint civilian-military

⁸ Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the establishment of a Civilian CSDP Compact (9588/23).

⁹ Civilian CSDP Compact – Mini-concept on possible civilian CSDP efforts to address security challenges linked to the preservation and protection of cultural heritage (12499/22).

¹⁰ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

¹¹ Implementing Guidelines for the EU Policy on Training for CSDP (11437/22).

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CSDP training programme¹². One tailored training on cultural heritage for the EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA) and the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) was also organised as part of the [EU Civilian Training Initiative](#). The training, designed by the Centre for European Perspective in cooperation with the Center for Cultural Property Protection of the University of Krems, was tailored to the needs of EUMA and EUMM related to cultural heritage in the Caucasus and performing tasks in line with the mandate.

Since 2023, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) has set up a dedicated focal point for cultural heritage protection and created a specialised cultural heritage protection network among civilian CSDP missions. The primary goal of this network is to facilitate the sharing of information and good practice among CSDP missions, improve communication with headquarters and between missions, and identify challenges while providing necessary support. By improving coordination and streamlining communication processes, the network aims to address issues related to cultural heritage protection more effectively and ensure that all missions are well informed and supported in their work.

As of today, six civilian CSDP missions are actively part of the specialised cultural heritage protection network, have identified a cultural heritage focal point, and are regularly interacting with local authorities and national and international stakeholders¹³, to plan and implement activities regarding cultural heritage.

Within the military CSDP, activities related to the protection of cultural heritage are currently included in a limited number of missions, but they are covered by the training provided as part of the EUMAM Ukraine Special Training Command, the EU Training Mission in Somalia, and the EU Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA). Furthermore, over the past year, EUTM RCA has actively monitored threats to cultural heritage and worked to

¹² The CSDP training programme consists of a continuously updated list of courses in Schoolmaster <https://goalkeeper.eeas.europa.eu/goalkeeper/>. Training providers should enter their courses there as soon as these are planned.

¹³ Among the cited partners in cultural heritage-related activities of CSDP missions are: Europol, Interpol, the EU Satellite Centre, Blue Shield International, Frontex, the International Council of Museums, UNESCO, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Eurojust, Europa Nostra and the International Council on Monuments and Sites.

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raise awareness of the need for its preservation, particularly through the Strategic Advice Pillar, where the mission is encouraging collaboration between defence sector leaders, local partners, and international organisations.

See Annex 1 for a detailed analysis of the activities performed by civilian CSDP missions in the reporting period.

4. FIGHT AGAINST ILLICIT TRAFFICKING OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

Illicit trafficking of cultural property poses a significant threat to both cultural preservation and security. It can provide funding for criminal and terrorist organisations, facilitate money laundering, and be used for other less detectable illicit activities such as sanctions evasion¹⁴. Europol's recent report on the EU most threatening criminal networks and its Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment¹⁵ highlight also the threat posed by criminal networks involved in trafficking cultural goods¹⁶.

In response, the Commission adopted the EU action plan against trafficking in cultural goods in December 2022. This plan addresses not only the typical crimes associated with illicit trafficking but also the broader criminal activities linked to the misuse of cultural property for criminal purposes, including money laundering and terrorism financing. The plan emphasises the need for international cooperation, recognising that combating this issue effectively requires global action, which includes supporting third countries in conflict and crises.

On 8 June 2023, the Council adopted conclusions on the fight against trafficking in cultural goods endorsing the EU action plan against trafficking in cultural goods¹⁷. In the text, the Council emphasises the importance of this issue due to its severe impact on cultural heritage

¹⁴ In this regard, the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency launched an alert in 2024 (<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/692-0735-necc-amber-alert-sanctions-evasion-money-laundering-in-the-art-sec/file>).

¹⁵ Europol, Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2021, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/european-union-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta-2021>.

¹⁶ Out of the 73 most threatening criminal networks that engage in organised property crime in the EU, three are involved in cultural goods trafficking (Europol (2024), *Decoding the EU's most threatening criminal networks*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/Europol%20report%20on%20Decoding%20the%20EU-s%20most%20threatening%20criminal%20networks.pdf>).

¹⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the EU Action Plan against Trafficking in Cultural Goods (16107/22).

and its role in supporting organised crime and terrorism. In line with the EU action plan against trafficking in cultural goods, key strategies highlighted include raising awareness and strengthening legislation to help market participants, collectors and cultural institutions prevent and detect trafficking. This involves improving the traceability and reporting of cultural goods and better cataloguing using tools like Object-ID¹⁸, created by the International Council of Museums (ICOM). Furthermore, the Council stresses the need to: (i) improve authorities' understanding of the issue and strengthen their tools to combat trafficking; (ii) improve cooperation among national and international agencies; and (iii) address uneven criminalisation across the EU. The Council conclusions contain calls for the Commission, for Member States, and for both the Commission and Member States.

The Council also acknowledges the international scope of cultural goods trafficking and calls for a multi-faceted approach, including external action. Key recommendations include:

- increasing support for non-EU countries by strengthening their capacity for cross-border cooperation and investigations into money laundering related to cultural goods;
- boosting international public awareness by supporting ICOM in upgrading its observatory and working with UNESCO to create a journalist's manual on reporting cultural heritage crimes; and
- providing specific aid to Ukraine to safeguard its cultural heritage during the war, including assistance in registering and evacuating collections and physically protecting them from harm.

The 14th sanctions package (24 June 2024) related to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine includes measures to counter trafficking of cultural property, specifically to protect Ukrainian heritage.

Fighting illegal trade in cultural property is also a priority for the EU's fight against serious and organised crime under the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats

¹⁸ [Object Identification \(Object ID\)](#) is an internationally recognised documentation standard conceived to identify and record cultural goods.

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(EMPACT) for 2022-2025. EMPACT's operational action plan on organised property crime includes several measures aiming to disrupt criminal networks involved in crimes related to cultural property. One of these measures, codenamed 'Pandora', saw the involvement of customs and law enforcement authorities from various EU Member States and third countries, and also targeting trafficked objects from source countries outside the EU such as Ukraine¹⁹.

A range of measures can be developed using EU tools such as CSDP missions, the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) instrument and Twinning, or dedicated projects to address these challenges and strengthen the global response to trafficking in cultural property.

One example is the TAIEX 23rd International Forum for Prosecutors on Fighting Cross-Border Organised Crime, held in Brussels from 28 February to 1 March 2024. This event brought together senior prosecutors and judicial representatives from EU Member States, enlargement and neighbourhood regions²⁰, and EU institutions, alongside experts from Eurojust and the European Public Prosecutor's Office. The forum focused on fostering international judicial cooperation to combat cross-border organised crime, with a particular emphasis on human trafficking and the trafficking of cultural goods.

Another relevant initiative is the [EL PAcCTO](#) 2.0 programme against transnational organised crime with Latin America and the Caribbean (EUR 58.8 million, 2023-2027). This programme builds on the successful partnerships set up with Latin American partners as part of EL PAcCTO 1 (2017-2022) and expands its geographical scope to include the Caribbean

¹⁹ <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2024/85-arrests-6-400-objects-recovered-in-international-operation-against-art-trafficking>

²⁰ Participants represented: (i) **beneficiaries** (Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kosovo*, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye and Ukraine); and (ii) **EU Member States** (Bulgaria, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Spain).

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

region. EL PAcCTO 2.0 addresses a broader range of criminal markets, including the trafficking of cultural goods, and the economic dimensions of crime.

The objective of EL PAcCTO 2.0 is to strengthen the partnership between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in combating organised crime, improving public security and helping to ensure stability in both the LAC region and the EU. The programme incorporates a human rights and gender-oriented approach to ensure inclusive and equitable outcomes.

CSDP missions and operations have also played a role in combating the trafficking of cultural property, as discussed in previous sections. Both EUAM Ukraine and EUAM Iraq support local authorities through various initiatives. EUAM Ukraine addresses wartime looting by organising conferences and workshops to strengthen cooperation among law enforcement, the judiciary, and cultural sectors, focusing on integrating cultural crimes into training and supporting the creation of specialised investigative units. Meanwhile, EUAM Iraq is paying particular attention to legislative reforms, public awareness, and capacity building. They run educational campaigns, improve legal frameworks, and implement the national cultural heritage protection database to track stolen artefacts. Both missions work to strengthen legal tools, raise awareness, and support investigations to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

The EU also funds several projects in various neighbouring regions that are designed to tackle, at least partially, the issue of trafficking of cultural property:

- supporting the Royal Department for Environment Protection and Tourism in Jordan, aiming to strengthen the department's cultural heritage protection capacity by improving its investigative abilities and securing heritage sites and archaeological areas;
- EULEAD II in Libya, which focuses on improving human security, including capacity building for the Tourism Police and the Department of Antiquities;
- fighting against the illicit trafficking of cultural property in the Western Balkans, aiming to strengthen legal, technical and institutional frameworks for protecting movable cultural heritage; and

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- strengthening the institutional capacities in dealing with cultural heritage and environmental crimes, that aims to boost North Macedonia's capacity to combat illicit trafficking of cultural property and environmental crimes.

See Annex 2 for more data on these projects.

5. SUSTAINABLE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Over the years, the EU, in collaboration with its partners, has initiated, supported and planned numerous projects worldwide, aiming to safeguard and promote cultural heritage for the benefit of communities globally. EU Delegations play a fundamental role in supporting this external action, highlighting the EU's extensive involvement in supporting both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Across various regions, EU-funded projects show the EU's commitment to harnessing cultural heritage for sustainable development and social cohesion. These initiatives range from supporting street art and digital preservation measures to fostering community resilience through cultural festivals. By promoting awareness through educational programmes and artistic expression, these projects enrich cultural identities and encourage dialogue both locally and internationally. Collaboration with local partners and international organisations ensures that cultural heritage remains a vital force for unity and progress, increasing resilience and celebrating diversity.

In the Middle East and North Africa, EU-funded projects have had significant impact on preserving heritage and empowering communities through cultural production and site rehabilitation. In Asia, projects target heritage-based tourism and cultural exchanges, promoting peacebuilding and sustainable development. In Europe, initiatives range from revitalising cultural sites to promoting reconciliation and creativity across diverse regions. Finally, in Central and South America, the EU supports projects that aim to promote cultural development, community resilience, and social inclusion.

See Annex 2 for a detailed list of projects implemented per region.

6. WAY FORWARD AND CONCLUSIONS

Data provided by EU Delegations and CSDP missions and operations reveal numerous challenges and opportunities surrounding cultural heritage protection worldwide. In particular, these data highlight issues such as securing funding for restoration projects, impact of climate change on cultural heritage, raising public awareness, and ensuring a skilled workforce for proper management of heritage sites and objects. The lack of trained professionals and robust legal frameworks further complicates this work. There is an urgent need for comprehensive inventories, encompassing both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Additionally, well-defined cultural policies and strategies are necessary to ensure a coordinated approach to preservation. Ultimately, to ensure the long-term success of cultural heritage preservation, it is vital to foster a stronger sense of ownership within local communities, revive economies linked to tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and promote sustainable tourism.

Below is a list of key challenges faced by partner countries, identified by the EU Delegations and various other stakeholders working in cultural heritage protection.

- Financial constraints. Funding is often limited for restoration, maintenance and documentation of cultural heritage and, in general, for policies related to cultural heritage and their implementation.
- Capacity gaps. A shortage of skilled professionals in areas related to cultural heritage (e.g. restoration, heritage management, and archaeology) hinders preservation efforts.
- Weak legal frameworks. Loopholes in laws and inadequate enforcement facilitate looting, illegal construction, and illicit trade in cultural artefacts.
- Public indifference. Lack of awareness of the importance of cultural heritage can result in neglect and even vandalism.
- Incomplete inventories. The absence of comprehensive records of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage makes informed decision-making and relevant protection work difficult.
- Uncoordinated action. The lack of a well-defined national cultural policy and strategy can lead to a fragmented approach to preservation.
- Community disengagement. Failing to involve local communities in preservation work can foster a sense of detachment and hinder long-term sustainability.

- Unsustainable tourism. Tourism that prioritises profit over preservation can damage both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- Disaster risks. Natural disasters and climate change pose a growing threat to irreplaceable cultural treasures.

However, these challenges lead to the below opportunities for work in partnership with the EU.

- International support. Collaboration with international organisations and other partners can provide financial assistance, alternative means for funding, technical expertise, and training programmes.
- Capacity building. Investing in training programmes can create a skilled workforce to manage and preserve cultural heritage effectively.
- Strengthening legal frameworks. Developing robust laws and enforcing them effectively can deter looting and illegal activity.
- Public awareness campaigns. Raising public awareness of the value of cultural heritage can generate support and foster a sense of ownership.
- Comprehensive inventories. Creating detailed records of cultural heritage is essential for effective preservation planning and resource allocation.
- National cultural policies. A well-defined national cultural policy ensures a coordinated approach to preservation work.
- Community engagement. Actively involving local communities in preservation fosters a sense of ownership and ensures the authenticity of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- Sustainable tourism. Developing tourism that respects and protects cultural sites can provide a valuable source of income for conservation work.
- Disaster risk reduction. Investing in disaster preparedness plans and risk mitigation strategies helps safeguard cultural heritage from natural disasters and climate change.

Work to safeguard cultural heritage continues around the world. New legal frameworks are being developed, with some countries revising existing laws and others focusing on ratifying international conventions for increased protection. Technological advancements are playing a role as well, with 3D digitalisation of cultural sites increasingly being used for documentation purposes. Public awareness campaigns are being implemented to raise awareness of the importance of cultural heritage preservation. International collaboration is also increasing, with

joint projects being implemented by the EU and other stakeholders, channelling support for policy reviews and cultural heritage initiatives.

Furthermore, the EU can leverage the expertise of its Member States and their institutions, of its civil society organisations, and of a constellation of other stakeholders with relevant experience in cultural heritage protection. All these governmental and non-governmental organisations could bring valuable technical expertise and possible innovative solutions, increasing the EU's ability to preserve cultural heritage in line with its principles.

The EU's engagement in the field of cultural heritage could serve not only as a preservation effort but also as a powerful strategic communication tool. By investing in cultural heritage protection, the EU demonstrates its commitment to protecting global cultural legacies, which can build trust and foster goodwill, even in regions where political or diplomatic relations are strained. This approach could allow the EU to build bridges with hostile or challenging actors by showing that it cares about cultural preservation beyond political divides. In regions where the EU lacks direct engagement with *de facto* or *de jure* ruling authorities, cultural heritage protection initiatives can serve as a gateway for collaboration, opening avenues for dialogue and cooperation. By harnessing the experience of Member States, their institutions, but especially civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations, the EU can navigate sensitive geopolitical environments, gaining access to areas that are otherwise difficult to reach. This not only strengthens the EU's cultural diplomacy but could also help in maintaining influence in regions where traditional forms of engagement are limited.

The EU's commitment to protecting and promoting cultural heritage is evident in its diverse initiatives across the globe. However, the challenges posed by conflicts, climate change, illicit trafficking, and limited resources would necessitate more substantial investment.

Cultural heritage protection is not merely an expenditure but a strategic investment with possible high returns. Small-scale, targeted interventions can yield significant results, from preventing cultural heritage destruction to fostering community resilience and economic growth.

The EU's experience in supporting cultural heritage in countries such as Ukraine and Iraq, or in regions like the Balkans, demonstrates that cultural heritage protection brings about tangible benefits. By scaling up these initiatives, the EU can solidify its position as a global leader in

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safeguarding our shared cultural heritage for generations to come. Even a relatively modest increase in investment in cultural heritage protection can generate substantial dividends in terms of peace, stability, and human development.

ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY CIVILIAN CSDP MISSIONS

This Annex contains a detailed overview of the activities devised by the five civilian missions active in implementing the concept in the reporting period.

European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) in Iraq

The mission advises national authorities on ways to better protect and promote cultural heritage, so that it can help support peace, social cohesion and security in Iraq. Furthermore, the mission raises awareness, strengthens cooperation between stakeholders, and improves inventories and legal curricula in regard to cultural heritage protection at both ministerial and local levels. Additionally, the mission helps increase the capacity to counteract and fight cultural heritage-related crimes that help finance organised crime and terrorist activities.

The mission's activities include advising on legal reforms, developing educational campaigns, and promoting good practice for cataloguing and digitising collections. Additionally, the mission collaborates with the Council of Representatives and other bodies to amend and implement cultural heritage laws. This work aims to ensure that Iraq's legislative framework is robust enough to protect its cultural treasures and prosecute related crimes.

The mission is committed to increasing public awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage. The mission has organised campaigns and workshops, targeting younger generations, to educate them about the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

On 7 March 2023, the mission launched an awareness campaign titled '[Awareness of future generations will protect our antiquities](#)' at the Iraqi National Museum in Baghdad, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities, the Ministry of Interior, and the Baghdad Mayoralty. This campaign included workshops for students, the production of educational materials such as cartoons, posters with QR codes linked to animations, and drawing books. These resources are distributed through various channels to maximise their reach and impact.

A significant aspect of the mission's work involves increasing Iraq's capacity to combat cultural heritage-related crimes. The mission is implementing a German-funded pilot project to create a national cultural heritage protection database. This database will improve Iraq's ability to investigate, track and recover missing or stolen artefacts. By developing and installing the necessary hardware and software, the mission ensures that Iraqi authorities have the tools they need to effectively manage and protect their cultural heritage. The software is currently undergoing final customisation before being delivered to local authorities.

Furthermore, the mission emphasises the importance of integrating cultural heritage protection into broader disaster-risk-reduction strategies. This approach involves preparing for and mitigating the risks posed by natural and human-made disasters, ensuring that cultural heritage is safeguarded against all potential threats. In this regard, a joint [EUAM/NATO training](#) has been delivered to the Federal Police, the Heritage Antiquities Protection Police and the Civilian Defence Force.

European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine

Although cultural heritage protection is not explicitly mentioned in the mandate of the mission, it is referenced in parts of the mission's plan dealing with the investigation and prosecution of international crimes, particularly in the context of organised crime and wartime destruction.

Given the threats of looting and trafficking, as well as the need to investigate and ensure accountability for crimes against Ukrainian cultural heritage, the mission organised a 2-day high-level conference in May 2023 in Lviv, titled 'Cultural Heritage Crime – In Wartime and Beyond'. The conference brought together international and Ukrainian experts from law enforcement, the judiciary, and the cultural heritage sector to develop effective models of cooperation between areas involved in recovery of cultural heritage and investigation and prosecution of crimes committed against Ukrainian cultural heritage by the Russian militaries.

The conference highlighted the need for increased cooperation among Ukrainian law enforcement, judiciary, and cultural authorities, as well as collaboration with international institutions. Recommendations included integrating cultural crimes into Ukrainian law enforcement curricula and setting up specialised investigative and prosecution units for cultural heritage crimes. Another key recommendation was the formation of an interdepartmental working group dedicated to protecting Ukraine's cultural heritage.

In response to the identified needs, the mission continues to collaborate with local authorities in the fight against crimes related to cultural heritage and to ensure accountability for war crimes committed in this domain. This is being done together with the project Pravo-Justice, which aims to promote rule of law in Ukraine in alignment with EU standards and good practice.

In February 2024, the conference 'United for Justice. United for Heritage' was held in Kyiv, organised by the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, with support from the mission and other partners. This conference: (i) addressed the critical legal challenges posed by systematic attacks on cultural heritage; (ii) discussed progress in documenting and prosecuting these war crimes; (iii) explored effective investigative and prosecutorial strategies; and (iv) considered measures against the illicit trafficking of stolen cultural objects. The gathering of over 400 participants, including Ukrainian state authorities and global experts, facilitated

discussions on the extent of damage and the importance of holding Russia accountable for its actions.

The mission's international crimes component designed a series of 2-day workshops to train relevant local stakeholders to investigate and prosecute crimes affecting cultural heritage, using international best practice and training on international treaties and relevant case-law. These workshops are being conducted throughout 2024 at multiple locations across Ukraine, with two workshops already completed and more planned for the remainder of the year.

Further action is being planned, especially in cooperation with the Office of the Prosecutor General.

European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) in Kosovo

Cultural heritage protection serves as an important conflict prevention tool. It is indirectly part of EULEX's mandate to support Kosovo's rule of law institutions in becoming more multi-ethnic and better complying with international human rights standards and European best practice. Given that cultural heritage protection in Kosovo is often linked to fragile inter-ethnic relations and the population's trust in institutions, EULEX's mandate enables it to work on cases of sensitive inter-ethnic nature or those with human rights aspects.

Up until 2018, EULEX had an executive mandate that allowed strong engagement with cultural heritage protection, including supporting the creation of the Kosovo Police Religious and Cultural Heritage Unit and addressing hate crimes, including attacks on religious or cultural heritage. Following a significant reduction in the scope of its executive mandate in 2018, EULEX continued to monitor cultural heritage protection cases, but waited until the adoption of the 2021 Council Conclusions to take a more proactive and preventive approach. The Civilian CSDP Compact of May 2023 strengthened the need for engagement, leading EULEX to incorporate cultural heritage protection into its monitoring and operations, especially when posing security risks.

In 2023, EULEX closely monitored several cultural heritage protection legal cases, increased its outreach to key guardians of contested cultural heritage, increased patrolling of heritage sites, and paid attention to cultural appropriation trends with potential security implications. Kosovo's cultural heritage protection legal framework is advanced, marking special protective zones around mainly Serbian Orthodox cultural heritage. However, incidents of cultural appropriation by Kosovo authorities or individuals seeking to claim heritage as Catholic, Paleo-Christian, or Albanian/Illyrian have raised tensions that EULEX has helped to contain.

European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia

The protection of cultural heritage has been a relevant area for the mission since it was incorporated into its strategic framework as part of the 2018 strategic review. The significance of cultural heritage is reflected in the mission's operational plans, including the current OPLAN (EEAS(2022)2039, covering the period from December 2022 to December 2024). This plan outlines the mission's commitment to monitoring and reporting on cultural heritage as part of its work on stabilisation and normalisation. It specifies that the mission will collect information through various means, such as patrol observations, interviews, and satellite imagery, to assess and safeguard cultural heritage sites.

The mission's operational activities include developing and maintaining close cooperation with local, national and international entities involved in promoting and preserving cultural heritage. This involves implementing a network of cultural heritage focal points across field offices, which are responsible for capacity building and integrating cultural heritage concerns into the mission's work. Cultural heritage is also integrated into core internal documents such as the EUMM Mission Implementation Plan and Mission Information Collection Plan. Additionally, the mission's Human Rights Action Plan for 2023-2024 features several initiatives related to cultural heritage, including training modules and conflict-related heritage projects.

The mission conducts regular patrols to monitor key cultural sites along the administrative boundary lines, including cemeteries and churches, and assesses the impact of conflict and movement restrictions on these sites.

Despite these efforts, the mission faces significant challenges, particularly due to its lack of access to the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Monitoring in these areas relies heavily on open sources, satellite imagery, and cooperation with Tbilisi-based stakeholders. Issues such as unauthorised repairs, neglect, and the construction of military facilities near cultural sites are prevalent.

The mission supports cultural heritage projects through its Confidence Building Facility (CBF), which aims to foster connections between communities divided by administrative boundary lines. Cultural heritage projects funded by the CBF have demonstrated potential for significant confidence-building outcomes. The mission is awaiting approval for an increased CBF budget to further strengthen its cultural heritage initiatives, ensuring each project takes a 'do no harm' approach and avoids duplication with other EU action.

Furthermore, the mission advocates for access to cultural heritage sites and freedom of movement during key celebrations, such as Orthodox Easter and Lomisoba, through the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism. This advocacy has yielded successful outcomes in recent years.

Despite the established framework and active efforts, challenges persist, including limited funding for and expertise in cultural heritage protection, particularly in the breakaway regions. The Georgian Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, created in March 2020, oversees cultural heritage protection, although its website has been under construction for years. The Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation continues to manage heritage tasks, but has not updated its online presence since July 2020.

During the reporting period, the mission engaged with representatives from the Ministry of Culture at a local level, although no new government policies or measures on cultural heritage protection were reported for 2022/2023.

European Union Mission (EUM) in Armenia

Cultural heritage questions hold significant importance in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the theme is highly sensitive. In 2021, the International Court of Justice ordered Azerbaijan to take all necessary measures to prevent and punish acts of vandalism and desecration affecting Armenian cultural heritage. Since the exodus of displaced people from Nagorno-Karabakh, the preservation of cultural heritage in the region has become an even greater issue than before. Armenia has pledged to dedicate capacity to the preservation of the culture and traditions of Nagorno-Karabakh people, and to take all measures to ensure safeguarding, development and promotion of intangible cultural heritage of Nagorno-Karabakh people.

On the Armenian side, monitors of the mission have encountered destroyed or vandalised Azeri cemeteries during their human security patrols, but it is difficult to estimate when the damage occurred. Monitors have also encountered cemeteries that are maintained and taken care of.

The government of Armenia has adopted the 2023-2027 strategy for the preservation, development and popularisation of Armenia's culture.

Overall, while the mission's role is primarily observational, its activities could play a crucial part in highlighting issues and facilitating discussions that can impact cultural heritage preservation in the region.

EU-SUPPORTED PROJECTS RELATED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE (BY REGION)

In **Europe**, projects to protect cultural heritage have been developed in the Western Balkans region and the Eastern Partnership countries, Ukraine included.

- Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus²¹, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine)

EU4Culture (2021-2024), budget: EUR 7.9 million (ENI), implementing partners: Goethe-Institut (lead), Danish Culture Institute, Czech Centres and Institut Français.

The EU4Culture project aims to help make culture an engine for growth and social development across the six countries of the EaP region. It supports the strengthening of the role of the cultural sector as a driver of economic development. Through its interregional approach, the project promotes intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange across EaP countries. EU4Culture helps improve local governance in the culture sector by supporting regulatory processes and participative policy dialogue. The project places culture, the creative industries and cultural heritage sites at its core. These all carry huge potential for sustainable policies with a broad effect.

- Moldova

EU Support to Confidence Building Measures V, Component 3 - Cultural Heritage (2019-2023, extended to 2024), budget: EUR 4 million (ENI), implementing partner: United Nations Development Programme.

The fifth cycle of EU support to confidence-building measures (CBM) (2019-2023) aims to foster confidence between communities to help settle the Transnistrian conflict. A key component of the CBM programme is support to the conservation and restoration of cultural heritage on both banks of the Nistru river.

This includes two flagship projects for the restoration and rehabilitation of historical monuments of national importance: the Bender Fortress and the Chisinau National Circus.

²¹ On 28 June 2021, Belarus **suspended its participation** in the Eastern Partnership.

EU Support to Confidence Building Measures VI, Component 3 - Cultural Heritage, (2023-2025), budget: EUR 600 000 (NDICI), implementing partner: United Nations Development Programme.

The sixth cycle of EU support to confidence-building measures (2023-2025) aims to continue fostering confidence between communities to help settle the Transnistrian conflict. A key component of this phase is support to cultural heritage conservation and restoration on both banks of the Nistru river.

- Ukraine

House of Europe II (November 2022-April 2026), budget: EUR 10 million (NDICI), implementing partner: Goethe-Institut.

The project aims to build a more inclusive and resilient Ukrainian society by promoting professional exchanges and showcasing Ukrainian voices and cultural heritage. It improves the quality of work carried out by Ukrainian professionals, focusing on sustainability, minority rights, and cultural preservation. The project also increases awareness of EU programmes and supports civil society's resilience amid war-related challenges. Additionally, it fosters integration of national minorities, particularly the Jewish community, through dialogue and mutual understanding, while addressing key policy priorities such as digitalisation, media literacy, and ecological sustainability.

Crisis Inventory and Leap to Digitalization of Museum Registers (November 2022-April 2024), budget: EUR 267 360 (NDICI), implementing partner: Lviv Regional Public Organization Tustan.

The project's primary objective is to mitigate the impact of the war on Ukraine's cultural heritage. It focuses on protecting buildings and collections of museums, archives, libraries, monuments and sites, as well as supporting cultural heritage professionals to continue their work amid challenging conditions. The project is successfully digitalising hundreds of museum registers, supporting the preservation and accessibility of cultural records despite the ongoing war.

Acting to Preserve Ukrainian Heritage II (September 2023-March 2025), budget: EUR 2 million (FPI), implementing partner: ALIPH Foundation.

The specific objective of this project is to mitigate the impact of the war on Ukraine's cultural heritage. It focuses on protecting buildings and collections of museums, archives, libraries, monuments and sites, while also supporting cultural heritage professionals to ensure they can continue their work in Ukraine. The project is ongoing and continues to provide emergency support to Ukrainian cultural institutions, helping them manage and preserve their valuable heritage despite the challenges posed by the war.

U-RE-HERIT: Architects for Heritage in Ukraine (May 2023-April 2026), budget: EUR 1 million (Creative Europe), implementing partners: Architects Association of Lithuania and a consortium of 11 organisations. Funding: Creative Europe.

The U-RE-HERIT project focuses on post-war recovery of Ukraine's cultural sectors, emphasising cultural heritage. It creates a platform for collaboration among Ukrainian and European architects, urbanists and antiquarians to protect and develop Ukraine's urban and architectural heritage as a key aspect of sustainable recovery. The project tackles heritage evaluation, preservation and restoration, redefining national and local identities. Activities include workshops, seminars and public events to share knowledge, experiment with new approaches, and build expertise in heritage protection. Expected outcomes include research, guidelines, workshops and educational courses to support Ukraine's reconstruction and cultural preservation.

- South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and Moldova

EU4Dialogue (2021-2025), budget: EUR 15 million (ENI), implementing partners: United Nations Development Programme, DAAD, Goethe-Institut, CAMPUS France and Latvian National Library.

The project aims to facilitate exchange through education and culture across divides. This includes exploring opportunities to increase the use of cultural heritage sites and cultural spaces for confidence building through activities such as study visits to EU countries, webinars, workshops and in-person events for cultural heritage professionals.

- Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia)

Fighting against the illicit trafficking of cultural property in the Western Balkans (2020-2023), budget: EUR 2.8 million (IPA II), implementing partner: UNESCO.

The project aims to improve legal, technical and institutional frameworks in the Western Balkans for protecting movable cultural heritage, stepping up the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural goods. It enables the assessment of the state of play of the legal, institutional and policy frameworks in the Western Balkans, and of capacity-building and awareness-raising needs.

Regional programme to support culture and creativity in the Western Balkans (2022-2026), budget: EUR 8 million (IPA II), implementing partners: UNESCO, Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo and British Council.

The project aims to foster reconciliation and good neighbourly relations in the Western Balkans through culture. It promotes intercultural dialogue and increases the socio-economic impact of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans. It takes a multi-sectorial approach, targeting public authorities, the private sector and civil society organisations in culture. The project aims to: (i) improve the performance of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans; (ii) strengthen cultural cooperation within and with the Western Balkans; and (iii) enhance inclusive cultural heritage for local development by supporting cultural policies, strengthening partnerships fostering regional cooperation, and promoting heritage and mobility in the creative sector.

- Albania

EU4Culture (October 2020-June 2024), budget: EUR 40 million (IPA II), implementing partner: United Nations Office for Project Services.

The EU4Culture programme aims to mitigate the impact of the 2019 earthquake on Albania's cultural heritage by revitalising affected sites and monuments. This initiative supports Albania's socio-economic recovery by increasing its tourism potential, which has become even more crucial due to the COVID-19 pandemic's severe impact on the country's tourism sector. The action focuses on three specific outputs: (i) rehabilitating significant cultural heritage sites damaged by the earthquake; (ii) supporting local economic development; and (iii) increasing the Ministry of Culture's capacity to safeguard, manage and promote cultural heritage sites, and increase public awareness of the importance of cultural heritage sites in Albania.

EU for Economic Development - Tourism-led Local Economic Development, with focus on Culture Heritage (February 2019-February 2025), budget: EUR 6 million (IPA), implementing partner: Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo.

The objective of the project is to increase and preserve the usability and attractiveness of cultural heritage assets at the Byllis archaeological site. This includes preserving and restoring Byllis cultural heritage, improving accessibility, making cultural and natural assets more sustainable, and involving local communities in this work. The project also aims to boost local economic development by: (i) applying the EU's community-led local development (CLLD) approach; (ii) improving skills and capacities; and (iii) strengthening cooperation between local communities and park administration.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina

Contribution of CSOs networks to improve the cultural heritage in BiH (January 2021-December 2023), budget EUR 553 900 (EU Contribution: EUR 498 000, CSF), implementing partners: Association for intercultural activities and heritage rescue (AIASN), Association of citizens "Tolerancijom protiv razlicitosti (TOPEER), NGO "Foundation of Local Democracy", and association of citizens NAPREDAK "Democracy, Organizing, Progress".

The project focuses on protecting and promoting cultural heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina by fostering partnerships between civil society organizations (CSOs) and governmental cultural authorities. It aims to strengthen CSO networks, improve legal and institutional frameworks, introduce standardized management methodologies, and raise awareness of heritage protection. Key outcomes include the mapping and assessment of 55 CSOs, the establishment of networks in both the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska, and capacity building in strategic planning. Additionally, six rulebooks were created for the new Law on Cultural Goods in Republika Srpska, along with a heritage database model and a strategic document for Sarajevo's Cantonal Institute.

Cultural Heritage Vareš, part of 'Empowering Trust and Cohesion in BiH's Communities' (April-October 2023), budget: EUR 12 000 (FPI), implementing partners: Čuvari bosanske krune Bobovac, International Organization for Migration, United Nations Development Programme and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The project seeks to: (i) create meeting places in Vareš by facilitating advocacy efforts and promoting community events; (ii) encourage community-led advocacy processes and

collective action in arts and cultural heritage as a tool for strengthening social cohesion in the community; and (iii) increase positive interaction between and within targeted communities.

- Kosovo²²

Cultural Heritage as a Driver for Economic Revival of Janjevë/Janjevo (December 2021-December 2024), budget: EUR 3.4 million (EU contribution: EUR 2 million, IPA II), implementing partners: Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, and United Nations Development Programme Kosovo.

The project aims to use cultural heritage to stimulate socio-economic growth in the region, integrating tangible, natural and intangible heritage assets. Key achievements in 2023 include completing emergency consolidation work on nine houses and finalising restoration work on four others.

European Archaeological Mission in Kosovo: from Ulpiana to Iustiniana Secunda (December 2021-December 2024), budget: EUR 1 million (IPA II), implementing partner: École Normale Supérieure (ENS) – Paris Sciences et Lettres University.

The project aims to increase the visibility of archaeological heritage and develop tourism potential in Kosovo's rural communities, building on the remarkable findings like the Latin dedication by Emperor Justinian and Theodora at Ulpiana. This EU-funded initiative, which includes the unearthing of a significant episcopal basilica, contributes to advancing scientific expertise in treating, maintaining, and enhancing archaeological heritage. Led by international and local experts, the project not only deepens understanding of Kosovo's ancient history but also equips local institutions with modern archaeological tools and fosters collaboration between international experts and the Ministry of Culture.

- North Macedonia

Strengthening the institutional capacities in dealing with cultural heritage and environmental crimes (January 2024-October 2025), budget: EUR 1 million (IPA III), implementing partners: Italian Carabinieri and EUTALIA.

²² This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

This twinning project aims to strengthen North Macedonia's capacity to combat illicit trafficking of cultural property and environmental crimes. Working closely with the Ministry of Interior, the project focuses on enhancing prevention, investigation, and prosecution capabilities. It emphasizes practical, operational improvements and fosters international cooperation

In the **Middle East and North Africa** region:

- Egypt

Life goes on in the City of the Dead (2022-2025), budget: EUR 900 000 (NDICI), implementing partner: ARCHINOS LLC.

The project builds on the results of the project 'Cultural Heritage for the living in the City of the Dead' (2017-2022) and continues to focus on preservation of Mamluk heritage and development and promotion of local crafts. Craft objects are now produced and sold by local women trained by the previous project and public cultural events are organised in the restored buildings.

Boosting Heritage Tourism in Islamic Cairo (2022-2024), budget: EUR 600 000 (NDICI), implementing partner: AGA KHAN FOUNDATION.

The project has played a role in rehabilitating and conserving the Al-Maridani Mosque in Islamic Cairo. It will also focus on expanding the tourist route around the mosque and help boost economic activity.

- Iraq

Job creation in the rehabilitation of old cities of Mosul and Basra (2019-2024), budget: EUR 20 million (NDICI), implementing partner: UNESCO.

Part of the project 'Reviving the Spirit of Mosul and Basra', it promotes social cohesion, job creation and reconciliation through the restoration and reconstruction of historical urban landscapes. This project will also boost economic recovery and social cohesion by creating

decent jobs in the reconstruction of the historical urban centres of Mosul and Basra. It will also support small to medium-sized enterprises active in various sectors and the cultural and creative industries.

Support to livelihood through cultural heritage development in Kurdistan region (2019-2023), budget: EUR 4.5 million (EUTF Syria - Madad), implementing partner: UNESCO.

The project has supported livelihoods through cultural heritage development, created jobs and promoted the sustainable development of heritage assets in the region. It is supporting the revitalisation of the Erbil Citadel and the Charsteen Cave in Dohuk, with the involvement of Syrian refugees, vulnerable host communities and displaced Iraqis working on the sites.

Education and cultural heritage - BANUU Project (2020-2023), budget: EUR 1.1 million (NDICI), implementing partner: University of Bologna.

The project aims to design new pathways for employability and entrepreneurship of Iraqi students in archaeology and cultural heritage.

- Jordan

Support to livelihoods through cultural heritage development in Jordan (2019-2023), budget: EUR 6.5 million (EUTF Syria - Madad), implementing partner: UNESCO.

The main objective of the project was to create decent job opportunities through culture as a source of resilience. This was achieved by engaging locals and Syrian refugees in the preservation and development of cultural heritage sites for tourism purposes in the northern districts of Jordan with Employment Intensive schemes for safeguarding and rehabilitation of cultural heritage. The programme targets almost 2 500 Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians, working on six heritage sites.

Supporting the Royal Department for Environment Protection and Tourism (RDEPT) in enforcing environmental and tourism laws effectively in Jordan (2022-2023), budget: EUR 1 million (ENI), implementing partners: Italian Carabinieri, the Metropolitan City of Florence and EUTALIA.

The project aimed to strengthen the institutional framework and the capacity of the recently formed Royal Department for Environment Protection and Tourism (RDEPT) in order to enable it to protect the natural and cultural heritage of Jordan. The project aims to strengthen the RDEPT's capacity in the field of cultural heritage protection by increasing its investigating capacity and its capacity to secure heritage sites and archaeological areas.

- Lebanon

Recovery of Housing and Culture & Creative Industries for Beirut (2021-2025), budget: EUR 13 million (LFF - Lebanon Financing Facility), implementing partner: UN Habitat with support from the UN Refugee Agency and UNESCO.

Taking a people-centred approach, the project aims to bridge the gap between immediate humanitarian response and medium-term recovery and reconstruction work to put Lebanon on a path of sustainable development. The main components are: (i) supporting the rehabilitation of residential buildings of heritage significance and providing sustainable housing solutions to vulnerable households directly affected by the Port of Beirut explosion; and (ii) supporting the recovery of the cultural and creative industries.

Liban Cinema (2022-2024), budget: EUR 150 000 (NDICI), implementing partner: Liban Cinema.

The project aims to support the Lebanese intangible cultural heritage of cinema producers as key stakeholders of the film industry. In particular, it aims to help them get access to funding and acquire entrepreneurship skills to better cope with the current highly challenging situation in Lebanon.

Support Cabriolet Film Festival 2024 (January-June 2024), budget: EUR 5 000 (Press& Information Budget), implementing partner: Cabriolet film festival.

This annual film festival takes places in Beirut. With EU support, the scope of this festival was broadened in 2024, as the film festival was brought to Tripoli (2024 Arab Capital of Culture), as well as a host of medium-sized Lebanese towns.

- Libya

EULEAD II - Libya Expertise, Analysis and Deployment (LEAD), Phases II and III (2020-2023), budget: EUR 8 million (NDICI), implementing partner: BUSINESS AND STRATEGIES IN EUROPE - B&S²³.

The project aims to support the overall improvement of human security in Libya as a basis for necessary political reconciliation, confidence-building, and reform. It encompasses: (i) capacity-building activities for the Tourism Police and staff of the Department of Antiquities; (ii) the development of a risk assessment matrix for the Tourism Police; and (iii) the installation of a CCTV system and floodlights on the Sabratha archaeological site.

Strengthening Local Capacity for Resilience and Recovery phase 3 (SLCRR Top-up) (2022-2023), budget: EUR 207 236 (EUTF), implementing partner: United Nations Development Programme.

The project focuses on the rehabilitation and social valorisation of the Al-Akhyar Palace.

The rehabilitation work covers an architectural survey and all restoration and maintenance work on the building, to restore it to its original state in line with the international restoration standards issued by UNESCO.

- The Occupied Palestinian Territory

A community living museum for Palestinian youth (2019-2023), budget: EUR 927 000 (ENI), implementing partner: Associazione di Terra Santa.

The project aimed to support the preservation of the Palestinian character of the Old City of Jerusalem, including its cultural heritage and identity. The first specific objective was to create a safe learning space for Palestinian children, young people and their families in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem. The second specific objective was to strengthen the cultural identity and heritage of Palestinians living in the Old City. This involved fostering a sense of ownership among young Palestinians of their diverse and complex cultural heritage through the exploration of different historical periods of the Old City, such as antiquity, the Roman period, and the Byzantine period.

²³ Since 2 November 2023 Business and Strategies in Europe (B&S Europe) rebranded to GOPA Partners in Action for Change and Engagement, abbreviated as GOPA PACE.

Stories of Palestine - Palestinian communities promote their culture (2020-2024), budget: EUR 500 000 (ENI), implementing partner: Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V.

The project aims to strengthen adult education centres in Palestinian rural areas by fostering cultural education and action. Specifically, eight community-based adult education centres will strengthen their capacity to organise cultural events that promote local cultural heritage. The focus will be on active civic engagement of local women, men and young people, with special attention to values of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. Moreover, because the targeted communities will have increased opportunities for quality cultural education and action, they will be able to increase their engagement in artistic expression.

Cultural rights for inclusive and equitable Palestinian development process (2021-2024), budget: EUR 998 419 (NEAR TS), implementing partner: Rozana Association for the Development of Architectural Heritage.

The project aimed to place cultural rights at the heart of Palestinian development policies and to ensure a people-centred, inclusive and equitable development process. Planned activities included strengthening the capacity of cultural and touristic civil society organisations and rural community-based organisations to raise public awareness, document violations, and impact decision-making for inclusive cultural rights at local and national levels. The project successfully enabled these organisations to become transparent and accountable representatives that reflect the needs of their local communities, including those of women and young people.

Palestinian Cultural Radio (2021-2024), budget: EUR 499 996 (NDICI), implementing partner: Goethe-Institut.

The project aims to promote Palestinian cultural expression and national identity as well as to help overcome the geographical and social fragmentation of Palestinian civil society. Specifically, it will boost the development of independent and critical cultural audio content and audio journalism in remote and marginalised communities in Palestine.

- Tunisia

Patrimoine 3000 (2019-2024), budget: EUR 16.5 million (ENI), implementing partners: Expertise France and French Ministry of Culture.

This project aims to support the development of cultural heritage and is part of *Tounes Wijhetouna* ('Tunisia: our destination'), which supports the diversification of tourism, the development of handicrafts, and the promotion of cultural heritage.

The project focuses on promoting cultural heritage in Tunisia, with two main components:

- Promotion of the Museum and Site of Carthage: The EU is investing approximately €10 million in the renovation of the Carthage Museum and surrounding site. This includes the launch of an international architecture and scenography competition.
- Enhancement of Tunisian Architectural Heritage: This involves a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mechanism to support heritage sector projects. A first contract was signed for the renovation of a former Spanish fort in La Goulette, with an investment of €15 million. Around ten additional projects are being developed, aiming to attract private investment in cultural, museum, heritage, tourism, and creative industries sectors. One example is the Djerbahood project, an urban development and street art initiative in the Jewish village of Erriadh, Djerba.

- Yemen

Cash for Work Phase II: Supporting youth economic resilience in Yemen through job creation in heritage rehabilitation and creative industries (2022-2024), budget: EUR 20 million (NDICI), implementing partner: UNESCO.

This project is a continuation of the 'Cash for Work' project. It builds on existing resources and models (damage assessment reports, urban rehabilitation guidelines). With this new phase, the geographical scope of the project was expanded to cover two new governorates (Sa'ada and Socotra). The overall aim of the action is to help improve livelihood opportunities for women and young people in Yemen by creating jobs in heritage rehabilitation and cultural industries. The project provides economic relief to local women and young people through cash-for-work schemes that distribute wages to at least 6 000 vulnerable young people with low income employed in rehabilitation in urban and rural areas across various governorates.

Yemen Creative Hubs (April 2022-March 2024), budget: EUR 600 000 (NDICI/CSO-LA), implementing partner: Goethe-Institut.

The specific objective of the project is to strengthen civil society stakeholders' capacity for and performance in using arts and culture to boost the resilience of communities in fragile situations and strengthen the peacebuilding process in Yemen. The main activity of the project is the inauguration of three hubs in Sana'a, Mukalla and Aden. They are not only intended as a space

where people go to use the facilities or to attend training sessions and events, but also as an alternative to the battlefield. Moreover, the project will provide qualification and financing opportunities for individual cultural workers and cultural organisations in Yemen.

In **Asia**, the EU has been implementing projects in:

- Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan

Silk Roads Heritage Corridors in Afghanistan, Central Asia and Iran (2018-2024), budget: EUR 4.4 million (ENI), implementing partner: UNESCO.

The aim is to promote the contribution of culture to sustainable development, notably through heritage-based tourism development. The activities aim to help improve livelihoods of communities in the region, including young people and women, through: (i) capacity building and the creation of opportunities for income generation and jobs; (ii) rehabilitation of historical sites; and (iii) technical assistance to local communities.

In Afghanistan, the project conducted community-based inventorying and other activities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, until 2021. At the moment, development support, including to cultural heritage, to Afghanistan remains frozen since the fall of the constitutionally elected government in August 2021, in line with the EU's five benchmarks on Afghanistan.

In Uzbekistan, a madrassa was rehabilitated and the Bogbonli Mosque in Khiva was conserved. In Kyrgyzstan, the Second Buddhist temple in Krasnaya Rechka was restored and conserved. In Iran, the restoration of four domes of Yengi Emam Caravansary was completed. In Kazakhstan, conservation work on the Shakhristan citadel of the Kulan site is planned to be launched. Seven management plans for the cultural sites on the World Heritage and Tentative Lists of Kyrgyzstan and four management plans for the sites of Tajikistan were finalised and are to be submitted to the relevant national authorities for their consideration and approval.

- Indonesia and Timor-Leste

Promoting Inclusive and Culture-Based Practices for Conflict Prevention, Preparedness, and Resolution through Youth-Focused Peacebuilding in Indonesia and Timor-Leste (February 2023-July 2025), budget: EUR 1 million (FPI), implementing partners: ChildFund International Indonesia and ChildFund Timor-Leste in partnership with local NGOs.

The project aims to support peacebuilding in Lampung (Indonesia) and Liquiçá (Timor-Leste) by strengthening conflict prevention and resolution through culture-based practices. Its specific objective is to empower and connect civil society organisations targeting young people to play an active role in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, preparedness and resolution by integrating culture-based practices such as Piil Pesenggiri in Lampung and Tara Bandu and Nahe Biti Bo'ot in Liquiçá into their communities.

- Philippines

Civil society, women and youth promoting culture of peace in Mindanao (February 2023-January 2026), budget: EUR 1 million (MIP), implementing partners: CARE Nederland (lead coordinator), Oxfam Pilipinas, Community Organizers Multiversity, Inc., Assistance and Cooperation for Community Resilience and Development, Inc., and Nisa Ul Haqq fi Bangsamoro Inc.

The overall objective of the project is to help reduce drivers of chronic conflict and violence in Moro and Lumad communities, by strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations and groups of young people and women in Mindanao through: (i) gender-sensitive and inclusive cultural peacebuilding measures and partnerships; (ii) documentation of positive peace narratives and preservation of cultural peacebuilding expressions and practices within community structures and in advocacy spaces; and (iii) improved understanding and recognition of conflict drivers and injustices among conflict-affected Moro and Lumad communities by contextualising peace education in formal and non-formal education curricula.

In Sub-Saharan Africa:

- Angola

Recovery, Enhancement and Dissemination of the Tchokwe Musical Heritage (2019-2023), budget: EUR 35 000 (EDF), implementing partners: Dundo Regional Museum and Jesuit Refugee Service.

The project's main objective is to generate cultural, economic and social development by recovering, preserving and transmitting Tchokwe musical heritage. It supports the Dundo Regional Museum's work on digitisation of musical archives; provides support to musicians and artisans working with the instrument specifically used to play Tchokwe music ('kisanji');

and supports the Dundo Ethnographical Museum in its awareness-raising and educational role, to attract general public interest and tourism to the Lunda-Norte region.

- Burkina Faso

Identitaire (film) (March-October 2023), budget: EUR 59 447 (EDF), implementing partner: Loyale Production.

The aim of the project is to help protect movable heritage through audiovisual awareness. *Identitaire* is a series that explores cultural heritage in Africa and its importance in preserving African identity and values. The series focuses on the trafficking of art objects, which threatens the African cultural heritage.

Ouaga Street Art Tour, 1^{ère} édition : une mise en valeur artistique du patrimoine urbain et humain des quartiers de Ouagadougou (February-August 2023), budget: EUR 35 363 (EDF), implementing partner: Urban Faso.

This project seeks to produce a series of graffiti and drawn murals in 12 districts of Ouagadougou. The content of these frescoes will highlight the historical memory and culture of Burkina Faso based on strong identity references linked to each district.

Production of a 3D animated series «Burkina Faso : Un pays , un peuple , une culture plurielle et diverse» (February 2023-March 2024), budget: EUR 39 763 (EDF), implementing partner: PIT PRODUCTION.

The project aims to produce a multifunctional audiovisual medium that will ensure the cultural education of young people and the promotion of cultural heritage as a way of supporting social cohesion and living together in Burkina Faso.

- Cameroon

Cameroonian Cultural Network (January 2023-December 2023), budget: EUR 69 111 (ACP-UE), implementing partners: Centre de lecture et d'animation culturelle de Yaoundé, Goethe-

Institut Kamerun, Institut Français du Cameroun, and Centre International pour le Patrimoine Culturel et Artistique.

Cameroonian Cultural Network aims to develop the cultural and creative industries by creating jobs in Cameroon and building a value chain to make the work of professionals in the sector decent. It intends to revitalise the artistic and cultural scene in Cameroon and strengthen the development of a distribution system to facilitate access to various artistic and cultural productions. In particular, the project aims to develop a digital and physical platform that should serve as a strong network for artists, and facilitate the distribution of their artistic productions.

- Chad

Programme d'appui à la gestion concertée des aires protégées et écosystèmes fragiles du Tchad (APEF) (2017-2026), budget: EUR 34.7 million (EU contribution: EUR 33 million, EDF), implementing partners: African Parks Network (APN), SOS Sahel International France and Union Internationale pour la Conservation de la Nature.

Among the objectives of the project are promoting local culture through local crafts and valorising historical heritage. A scientific department of archaeology set up within the Natural and Cultural Reserve of Ennedi has inventoried a total of 343 registered archaeological sites. Most sites listed have a very poor conservation status. The best-preserved sites are rock art sites located in caves or sheltered by overhanging rock in areas that are difficult to access.

- Eritrea

Digital Technologies and Cultural Heritage Preservation in Eritrea: a Framework for an Improved Action (2019-2023), budget: EUR 300 000 (CSO-LA), implementing partner: Università di Pavia.

The project aims to foster and improve the quality of digital cultural heritage initiatives in Eritrea (training, mentoring, awareness raising, and preparing the national archive and library policy of Eritrea). So far, the Research and Documentation Center's digital library team has uploaded 13 mini digital libraries containing relevant educational materials, academic journals and references as well as entertainment materials. Around 800 books and 30 periodicals have been digitised, and a series of small workshops aiming to encourage young Eritrean scholars to publish in academic journals has been organised.

- Gambia

Her Map Gambia (September 2020-August 2024), budget: EUR 500 000 (FED), implementing partner: Initiative for Heritage Conservation.

The goal of the project is to strengthen civil society organisations as partners and stakeholders in promoting social development and inclusive and sustainable growth in the cultural and creative industries. It also aims to develop the business skills of heritage and cultural managers to achieve greater community solidarity and reduce irregular migration.

The project provided training on cultural heritage management to decision-makers, employees, tourism professionals and trainers, public opinion leaders, and public authority representatives in all six local government areas of The Gambia outside Greater Banjul (100 people).

Promoting Investments in Culture, Creative Arts and Sports to Enhance Resilience against Climate Change in Local Communities (May 2020-May 2023), budget: EUR 500 000 (FED), implementing partner: Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

This action pursues a threefold objective: (i) to support the production of innovative handicrafts and promote fair labour conditions; (ii) to promote traditional wrestling as intangible cultural heritage by creating a network of wrestling training clubs, and use wrestling as a tool to create solidarity among communities; and (iii) to develop a new regulatory environment to promote arts, culture and sports.

Craftspeople, vendors and wrestlers have been trained on topics related to their activities, as well as on entrepreneurship/finance, online marketing, climate change, and intellectual property rights. The project has also supported the passing of the new Intellectual Property Bill in Parliament and has organised awareness-raising seminars for arts and culture stakeholders.

- Ghana

Black Star International Film Festival (September 2023), budget: EUR 15 000 (EDF), implementing partner: National Film Authority.

The project aimed to promote Ghanaian film culture and strengthen the connections and linkages between European and Ghanaian film-makers. The Delegation supported film

screenings, panel discussions and networking opportunities for industry professionals and film enthusiasts with a penchant for films that highlight Ghana's culture.

Pa Gya! (October 2023), budget: EUR 7 000 (Press&Information Budget), implementing partners: Goethe-Institut, Writers' Project Ghana, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ghana, UNESCO, British Council and others.

This was the seventh edition of a literary festival that targets cultural enthusiasts and writers and celebrates Ghanaian literature and arts. The 2023 edition featured workshops, performances, readings, panel discussions, interviews, film screenings, and exhibitions.

Support to the Animation Summer School (July 2023), budget: EUR 27 000 (EDF), implementing partners: French Embassy and Les Gobelins School of Animation from France.

The EU Delegation supported a 2-week animation school for 16 young Ghanaians who learnt about 3D animation and how to create animated movies. Participants also received laptops with advanced graphic cards.

Support to MoTAC (from November 2023 onwards), budget: EUR 50 000 (EDF), implementing partner: Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture.

Support has been provided to the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture for revising the 2004 culture policy through stakeholder consultations. These consultations involved culture and heritage stakeholders, the Ghanaian government, and development partners such as the EU. Meetings were held in major cities across Ghana, including Accra, Tamale, Sunyani and Kumasi, to gather input on the most necessary updates and revisions to the 20-year-old policy. The outcome will be a revised Ghana culture policy.

- Liberia

Spotlight Initiative – Liberia Country Programme (2019-2023), budget: EUR 24.1 million (EU contribution: EUR 20.8 million, DCI/EDF), implementing partners: UN Women, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, Unicef and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The project aimed to replace the traditional ‘bush schools’ of Sande secret societies, where female genital mutilation (FGM) is practised, with different institutions called vocational and heritage centres (VHCs). VHCs provide a platform for dialogue and skills training for women and girls, helping them to abandon the practice of FGM. The VHCs offer alternative livelihood opportunities to former practitioners of FGM through climate-smart agriculture, business development, and skill training. The VHCs also provide formal primary education and mainstream the transmission of Liberian sociocultural heritage by traditional practitioners, allowing for ‘initiation without mutilation’. Thanks to the programme, around 800 zoes (female traditional practitioners) are now able to sustain themselves and their families through newly acquired skills. This training will most probably continue as part of a new initiative that is currently being developed.

- Mali

Djigui#(Espoir) – Promotion d’une culture malienne engagée, levier de développement des territoires vulnérables (December 2022-May 2026), budget: EUR 177 000 (ACP-UE), implementing partners: Seed, and Street Movie.

The project promotes culture as a driver of social, societal and economic development, with the overall objective of strengthening the creative industries in precarious neighbourhoods by supporting younger Malians in their role as catalysts for change. It has three main goals: (i) to increase the value of young people as creators of cultural and social innovations, and to support their integration into a network committed to the development of Malian territories; (ii) to help young women access formal and informal creative industries and activities, and to enable their economic and social emancipation; and (iii) to support the emergence of a local cultural dynamic promoting public dialogue and collective expression, through access to culture.

Brassage interculturel, artistique et sportif des jeunes des régions de Tombouctou et Taoudéni pour la paix et la cohésion sociale (March 2023-February 2026), budget: EUR 299 718 (NDICI), implementing partner: Association Festival vivre ensemble.

The project aims to: (i) offer young people in the two regions a range of activities that promote the development of safe and neutral spaces for intercultural dialogue and capacity building by promoting active citizenship and inter-community relations; and (ii) demonstrate the importance of art and cultural values in social development for better living together by creating and disseminating live performances (such as theatre and music) produced by young people aimed at the community in its entirety.

TANMINAKTE - Renforcer la cohésion sociale et le vivre ensemble par la promotion du patrimoine culturel immatériel de Tombouctou (December 2022-May 2026), budget: EUR 200 000 (NDICI), implementing partners: Association Malienne pour la Survie au Sahel and Association Festival vivre ensemble.

The project aims to: (i) help young girls and boys use various forms of cultural expression to play an active role in promoting social cohesion; and (ii) increase the visibility and promotion of cultural initiatives that promote living together and dialogue between young people and adults, as a key to social transformation.

- Somalia

Leveraging Puntland's Cultural and Sports Heritage in Enhancing Community Resilience and State Building (2020-2024), budget: EUR 400 000 (CSO-LA) (, implementing partner: KAALO.

The overall objective of the project is to promote gender equality and the inclusion of young people in peace- and state-building in Puntland through culture, arts and sports, in particular:

- to strengthen the capacity of traditional and contemporary artists to package advocacy and human-rights messaging in art on topical issues in Puntland;
- to expand access to open cultural and sporting talent incubation spaces for young people in Galkayo, Garowe and Bossaso towns; and
- to support sustainable collaboration in the use of culture, art and sports as civic awareness, democratisation and peacebuilding tools in Puntland.

The project has created opportunities for strengthening Puntland's culture, art and sports sector given the role it plays in advocacy messaging and public communication on key issues that affect society. So far, 200 cultural artists and sportspeople have gained advocacy and human rights management skills for sustainable talent management.

Berbera Cultural Centre (2020-2023), budget: EUR 400 000 (CSO-LA), implementing partner: Redsea Online Culture Foundation.

The overall objective was to support the development of a cohesive and inclusive society through culture and heritage. The specific objectives were to:

- set up the Berbera Cultural Centre, a hub for art, culture, literature, and heritage preservation;
- instil civic pride in residents of Berbera, in order to protect their culture and heritage through the centre;
- strengthen the human, technical and legislative capacity of Berbera Local Authority to protect and promote cultural heritage; and
- strengthen the ability of Berbera Local Authority to protect and promote public social spaces.

The Berbera Cultural Centre hosts training sessions on theatrical production, art exhibitions, heritage preservation, and poetry competitions. By collaborating with the municipality, the museum, the library, and a private architecture firm, the centre has effectively promoted and showcased the city's cultural heritage. As part of the digitalisation, preservation and promotion of heritage sites, the 3D regeneration of Laas Geel was accomplished, using the latest technology.

- Sudan²⁴

Afropolis Tungul: Urban biography of a cosmopolitan African capital (January 2024-May 2029), budget: EUR 2 million (Horizon Europe), implementing partner: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw.

The project aims to write an urban biography of Tungul (Old Dongola, Sudan), highlighting its medieval African heritage and conceptualising the city as a complex organism. This multidisciplinary project seeks to understand settlement persistence in riverine Africa, documenting Tungul's medieval and pre-modern city features. Analyses will cover urban design, structures, material culture, bioarchaeology, micromorphology and geochemistry. The findings will enrich Nubian datasets and offer new insights into urbanism and complex societies. Data collection will build on previous excavation results to consolidate all research conducted at Tungul.

Culture for Youth and cohesion (2023-2026), budget: EUR 5 million (NDICI), implementing partners: Goethe-Institut and Institut Français.

²⁴ Projects will be implemented according to the current security framework.

The project aims to support young people as catalysts for change in the democratisation and peace process through art and culture as drivers of freedom of expression, social cohesion, identity fostering, civic empowerment, and socio-economic opportunities.

- South Sudan

Enhancing Civil Society Through Evidence-Based Analysis of Conflict Dynamics and Human Rights Challenges, Promoting Local Women Voices in Research Development and Heritage Preservation in South Sudan (2020-2023), budget: EUR 1.2 million (EIDHR), implementing partner: Rift Valley Institute.

One of the aims of the project is to support the preservation of the South Sudan National Archives. A key partner in this work is the Ministry of Culture. The Greater Upper Nile and Greater Equatoria regions are well represented in the archival collection through previous archival work, and the current project is bringing documents from the Greater Bahr El-Ghazal region into the collection. There are also other collections in the country that are to be assessed and archived.

- Tanzania

Creative Youth for Social Cohesion (2023-2026), budget: EUR 1.4 million (CSO), implementing partners: Goethe-Institut and CEDEA.

The project aims to strengthen the role of culture in promoting human rights, artistic freedom, democratisation, good governance and more peaceful societies, by valorising the contribution of young people and culture to social cohesion at local level – in particular in the target areas of vocational education and recruitment of vocational education groups.

- Tanzania, Kenya and Mozambique

Kujenga Amani: Building peace on the Swahili Coast (April 2023-March 2026), budget: EUR 4 million (IfSP), implementing partners: Comitato Europeo per la Formazione e l'Agricoltura, Agency for Peacebuilding, Associacao Mulher Lei E Desenvolvimento, Muslims Women Advancement of Rights and Protection, Sambasports Youth Agenda CBO, The Global Religions for Children Foundation Tanzania, WE WORLD, Conselho Nacional Do Voluntario,

Peace Change Initiative, Stretchers Youth Organisation, Tanzania 4H Organisation and Tanzania Building Future Organisation.

The initiative focuses on four regions of the Swahili coast (Tanga and Mtwara regions in Tanzania; Mombasa and Kwale counties in Kenya; and Cabo Delgado province in Mozambique), the cradle of the Swahili culture, aiming to facilitate dialogue and peaceful cohabitation. The project will provide opportunities and safe spaces for dialogue among young people, religious and traditional leaders, media stakeholders, authorities and security providers. It explores peacebuilding efforts led by young people and promotes the Swahili creative arts as a way to reduce the potential for conflict between groups, while revitalising the traditional bonds of solidarity between the populations of the Swahili coast.

In **Central and South America**, the EU has been implementing projects in:

- Caribbean countries²⁵

Transcultura (January 2020-November 2023), budget: EUR 15 million (EDF), implementing partner: UNESCO.

The objective of the *Transcultura* programme is to integrate Cuba, the Caribbean and the EU into the programme through culture and creativity to harness diversity, build bridges between people and cultures of different linguistic areas, and foster the role of culture, heritage and creativity, as well as sustainable development. The programme aims to deepen cultural integration in the Caribbean, strengthen cooperation between people, and promote exchange between the region and the EU.

- Argentina

Respira Córdoba (March 2021-February 2024), budget: EUR 3.2 million (EU contribution: EUR 3 million, Sustainable City), implementing partners: Municipality of Córdoba (Argentina), and Municipality of Córdoba (Spain).

The project aims to make the central area of the city of Córdoba greener and renew this space by creating more accessible cultural routes and protecting and strengthening cultural heritage.

²⁵ Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The plan includes several projects to create a healthier, more inclusive, resilient and sustainable city centre.

- El Salvador

Plan Social (ended in 2023), budget: EUR 17 million (MIP), implementing partner: Dirección de Reconstrucción del Tejido Social.

As part of the EU's support to Salvadoran social and security plans, numerous measures were funded until 2023 to reclaim dangerous neighbourhoods for the residents who live there. One notable initiative under this programme is the creation of CUBOS – social centres set up in challenging neighbourhoods as safe havens for young people. Currently, there are 17 of these centres across El Salvador, aiming to catalyse positive change in communities historically plagued by high crime rates.

- Nicaragua

WINAMBA! Building more resilient communities for the comprehensive well-being of indigenous territories of TAWIRA, PRINZU AUHYA UN Y WANGKI TWI TASBA RAYA, and for their development with identity in the face of climate change (2021-2024), budget: EUR 900 000 (EIDHR), implementing partner: WeWorld – Gruppo di Volontariato Civile.

The project aims to support indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples in: (i) improving the management of their territories, and their well-being, including by letting young people and women participate in the management and enjoyment of good living; and (ii) protecting their identity, their culture, human rights and women's rights. This should empower these peoples' structures and support the processes of governance.

Art and Culture for Coastal Youth in Nicaragua (from 2023 onwards), budget: EUR 200 000 (EIDHR), implementing partner: CCFD-Terre Solidaire.

The project aims to strengthen the capacity for sociocultural development of indigenous and Afro-descendant young people in the municipalities of Prinzapolka and Kukra Hill of the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region and the South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region. It promotes artistic expression, the rescue of multi-ethnic identities, and the psycho-emotional development of coastal young people, as well as the cultural development of adolescent women and young people facing gender-based violence.

PUBLIC