



Ten recommendations on how to better protect cultural heritage from the impact of climate change

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Coinciding with the [European Heritage Days 2022](#), which this year revolve around the topic of sustainability, the Commission publishes today [a report](#) on strengthening cultural heritage resilience to protect it from the effects of climate change. The information gathered by a group of experts is alarming, as climate change is directly and indirectly threatening all forms of cultural heritage, among others through severe precipitation, long heatwaves, droughts, strong winds and sea-level rise – all of which are expected to increase in the future. In the report published today, the expert group put forward a set of [ten recommendations](#) aimed at helping to strengthen cultural heritage resilience to climate change.

Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya **Gabriel**, said: *"Protecting all types of cultural heritage from climate change is a wide challenge that we are taking on. This concerns archaeological sites and built heritage just as much as landscapes and movable heritage: we have to find an integrated approach that protects heritage qualities. The large number of countries that took part in the expert group is proof that this topic gains increasingly more importance and that there is a potential for cooperation, identification of gaps and exchange of best practices at European level."*

Improving cultural heritage resilience to climate change will involve a strategic shift towards investment in new forms of safeguarding and restoration. In today's report, experts point out that as different ministries are responsible for cultural heritage and climate change policies at national level, many players must continuously and consistently align their strategies to be truly efficient. This is complicated by the fact that there are no coherent methodologies for obtaining reliable information, quantitative data or deep knowledge about the decay and loss of cultural heritage.

The expert group recommends that actions be undertaken to fully integrate culture and cultural heritage issues into environmental sustainability and climate policy-making at all levels (local, regional, national, European, international). A regularly updated European climate change cultural heritage risk assessment map would provide valuable information of heritage at risk. In addition, more research shall be undertaken in order to identify and better understand the most severe threats and their potential impacts, as well as the costs involved in order to make cultural heritage resilient to climate change.

The report also points out that cultural heritage can be a most valuable source of knowledge and inspiration for policy makers, heritage managers and society as a whole. Experts collected a total of 83 good practice examples from 26 countries, which illustrate both the impact of climate change on cultural heritage and the potential of cultural heritage solutions in the context of climate change. Taking the example of built heritage, the report details that it acts as a repository of traditional knowledge and craft techniques that were often born out of energy and resource scarcities. A very high percentage of built heritage uses climate-friendly building materials, which were traditionally locally sourced and manufactured, avoiding high transportation costs and CO₂ emissions.

The group of experts worked in line with the [European Green Deal](#), presented by President Ursula **von der Leyen** in December 2019, which represents Europe's response to the grand challenges posed to our societies by climate change and aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

Background

A group of 50 experts from 25 EU Member States plus Switzerland, Norway and Iceland, working under the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), studied the impact of climate change on cultural heritage and collected best practice examples to protect and safeguard Europe's cultural heritage. The expert group met nine times from January 2021 to April 2022.

As a result, the expert group produced the report "Strengthening cultural heritage resilience for

climate change. Where the European Green Deal meets cultural heritage” in which they formulate a set of key recommendations for policy makers, based on their findings. Their work, carried out in the framework of the European Council's Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, marks the very first time that a political mandate is given to examine all forms of cultural heritage in times of climate change.

For More Information

[Strengthening cultural heritage resilience for climate change](#)

[Executive summary with ten recommendations](#)

[Annex with 83 good practice examples](#)

[Safeguarding cultural heritage from natural and man-made disasters](#)

[Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022](#)

[European Heritage Days 2022](#)

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