WHY? • OBJECTIVES
From providing digital access to physically inaccessible sites, to preserving priceless artefacts and exploring new ways of adapting and valuing cultural heritage for creative industries and other sustainable development opportunities, research and innovation (R&I) can nurture smart and technologically advanced solutions to the challenges Europe is facing in trying to protect and benefit from its cultural heritage.

The European Year is an opportunity to showcase and intensify investments that the EU has made in the development of European expertise in this field, through the EU Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020 and the Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC).

FOR WHOM? • TARGET GROUPS
Researchers, innovators, academics, cultural heritage professionals and experts, public authorities.

WHAT? • CONTENT OF THE INITIATIVE
The initiative has two main components:

COMPONENT I – PROMOTING EXCELLENCE
The initiative is showcasing best examples of EU-funded scientific research. From 2014 to 2020, the EU Framework Programme for research and innovation ‘Horizon 2020’ is expected to invest €500 million in cultural heritage. A Commission (DG RTD) Policy Review entitled ‘Innovation in Cultural Heritage Research’ was published in March at the occasion of the Year. Following a mapping exercise, the Policy Review makes suggestions designed to improve the European research framework after 2020. In June, the publication ‘Heritage at Risk: EU research and innovation for a more resilient cultural heritage’ was published, providing a comprehensive review of research and innovation projects on the preservation and sustainable management of vulnerable artifacts and sites.

The Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) has also developed a number of innovative tools designed to benefit the cultural heritage sector.

These include:

• Testing the use of smart materials on historic masonry structures to improve their seismic resistance and allowing post-earthquake structural assessment.

• 3D laser scanning technology used for damage assessment and reconstruction planning of historical buildings.

In 2018 and beyond, several new actions will be launched under Horizon 2020. These include:

• Allocation of €18 million for research in ‘Resilience and sustainable reconstruction of historic areas to cope with climate change and hazard events’, aiming at developing cost-effective technologies to increase resilience or reconstruct damaged historic areas after disasters, while fully respecting their historic value.
COMPONENT II – GENERATING EXPERTISE

In occasion of the ‘Fair of European Innovators on Cultural Heritage’ taking place in November 2018, a Community of Innovators in Cultural Heritage will be launched. The Community will help disseminate R&I results, create new synergies among key stakeholders and bridge the gap between research, market and society. An innovative web-platform is currently under construction. The platform will offer a virtual environment where innovators will have the chance to share results, exchange ideas, find new partners, create new synergies and develop new strategies. A ‘Social platform on endangered cultural heritage and on illicit trafficking of cultural goods’ will be created (see factsheet n°7).

KEY DATES:
- 15-16 November 2018 ‘Fair of European Innovators in Cultural Heritage’ and launch of the Community of Innovators in Cultural Heritage (together with its web-platform) in Brussels (Belgium).

PARTNERS
- Within the Commission, services dealing with research and innovation, education, culture, and the Joint Research Centre
- European universities

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