

FORTE CULTURA Congress 2026

La Línea de la Concepción (ES)

supported by Diputación de Cádiz

“From Cádiz to Europe: Fortifications and Sustainable Tourism”

Congress Center & Hotel “Ohtels Campo de Gibraltar”, Av. Príncipe de Asturias, 11300 La Línea de la Concepción

Concept note and programme



Concept Note

The FORTE CULTURA Congress 2026 in La Línea de la Concepción is dedicated to placing the rich and diverse heritage of Europe’s fortifications at the centre of a forward-thinking dialogue. This event will gather key actors from a broad spectrum – from managers and professionals of fortified heritage sites, local, regional and national authorities, to cultural routes, European networks, researchers, educators, interpreters, community organizations, creatives, and civil society actors.

The focus lies in connecting local realities with a broader European vision. Fortified sites are not only silent witnesses of history but also valuable resources for sustainable tourism, innovative educational opportunities, and vibrant cultural exchange. In this perspective, the Congress places particular emphasis on the development of regional clusters as operational platforms for cooperation, joint product development, and coordinated governance.

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The formal launch of the Andalusia Cluster during the Congress marks a concrete transition from strategic intent to territorial implementation.

Through various panels, workshops, and excursions, the Congress will address challenges and opportunities in the management, communication, and sustainable development of fortifications. Themes such as digitalization, participatory approaches, sustainability, inclusion, and the role of fortresses as places of exchange and European understanding will take centre stage.

Special attention will be given to Cultural Routes and the role of FORTE CULTURA. Networks and clusters are presented not merely as thematic groupings, but as structural pillars that reinforce the European dimension of fortified heritage and ensure long-term governance.

A key aspect of the Congress is the strengthening of European identity and cohesion. By fostering connections among diverse stakeholder groups and promoting interdisciplinary dialogue, the FORTE CULTURA Congress contributes to a more inclusive, informed, and sustainable Europe. From La Línea, a signal will be sent positioning fortresses as vibrant meeting points and engines for a shared European understanding.

The outcomes and impulses from the Congress will flow into future initiatives in networking and project work, establishing Europe’s fortified heritage as a long-term strategic asset for tourism, education, and civic engagement.

Host

We would like to thank our host, **La Línea de la Concepción**, for their tremendous support in preparing and hosting the FORTE CULTURA Annual Congress 2026 and General Assembly.

La Línea de la Concepción has been a member and station of FORTE CULTURA since 2018.

Spain constructed a formidable defense line, the *Línea de Contravalación de Gibraltar*, in 1730 to protect its border after failing to reclaim Gibraltar from England. The area saw renewed fortification during the Second World War, with hundreds of bunkers and artillery positions added along the coast, many built upon earlier structures. Today, the rich history of fortifications in La Línea de la Concepción remains visible and relevant, reflecting the region's strategic importance throughout the centuries. Discover more about La Línea de la Concepción on the FORTE CULTURA tourism portal: <https://forte-cultura.com/en/la-linea-de-la-concepcion-es/>

Promoting Institution



We sincerely thank our sponsor, the Diputación de Cádiz, for their generous support of the FORTE CULTURA Annual Congress 2026. Their commitment has been instrumental in enabling the organisation and successful delivery of this

important event. This collaboration highlights the significant value that the Cádiz region places on European cultural heritage.

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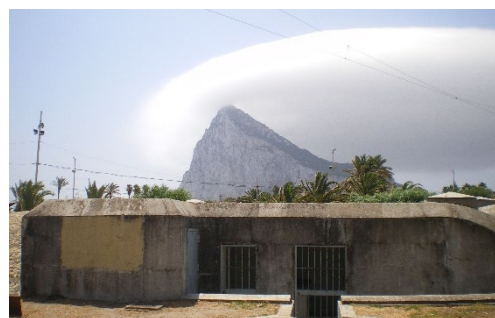
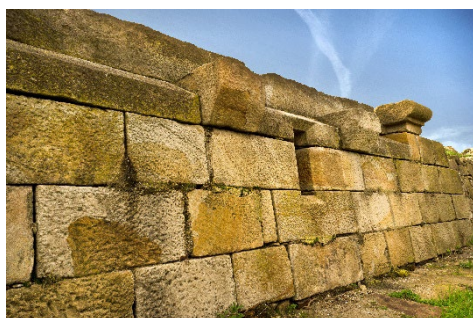
Programme

Tuesday 21st April 2026 - AGM

09.30

optional: On-site visits in La Línea de la Concepción

- *Defence Line 18th Century*
- *Bunker Line 20th Century*
- *Interpretation Centre Fortified Heritage*
- *City*



11.30

Workshop FORTE CULTURA Cluster Development Andalusia
for regional stakeholders only

13.30

Light Lunch

14.30

FORTE CUTURA General Assembly 2026
for members and invited guests only

- Welcome
- Review of the 2025 year by the board, the CFO and the Scientific Committee
- Report of current activities
- Outlook on upcoming activities and projects Information

20.30

Welcome Dinner in “Ohtels Campo de Gibraltar”
self-payment

“From Cádiz to Europe: Fortifications and Sustainable Tourism”

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Wednesday 22nd April - FORTE CULTURA CONGRESS 2026

The conference will be simultaneously translated into Spanish and English. The conference will be streamed online in original sound. Image, sound and video recordings will be made. By participating, you give your consent under data protection law to the use of the recordings in connection with conference communications.

08.30

Registration

09.00

Opening

- ❖ **José Juan Franco Rodríguez**
Mayor La Línea de la Concepción
- ❖ **May Gallego**
Comarca de Campo de Gibraltar
- ❖ **Filippo Cailotto**
President FORTE CULTURA

09.40

SESSION I

Policy Frameworks for Fortified Heritage: From National Strategies to Cultural Routes

- ❖ *The National Plan for Defensive Architecture and the Role of the Ministry of Culture within the Council of Europe Cultural Routes Programme*
Déborah Jiménez Pereda (ES), Directorate-General for Cultural Heritage and Fine Arts, Ministry of Culture
- ❖ *Military Tourism on Request – Portuguese Fortifications under the Jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defense and the Presidency*
Catarina Costa Macedo (PT), Former member of the Portuguese Military Tourism project
- ❖ *From Fortress to Forum: Heritage Interpretation, Art and Memory for Sustainable Development*
Elisa Bailey, Interpret Europe, coordinador nacional, Spain;
Consultor sénior, Lord Cultural Resources
- ❖ *FORTE CULTURA: Cultural Route and Cluster Strategy*
Filippo Cailotto (IT), President, FORTE CULTURA

11.00

Coffee Break and networking

Exhibition Fortified Heritage Campo de Gibraltar

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11.30

Session II

The Andalusia Cluster: From Strategy to Territorial Commitment

- ❖ *Subroutes and Cluster Strategy: The Andalusia Vision*
Olha Tikhonova (UA), FORTE CULTURA
- ❖ *The medieval fortifications of Algeciras*
Carlos Gómez de Avellaneda Sabio (ES), Institute of Campogibraltarian Studies
- ❖ *The Bunkers of the Isthmus and Operation Felix*
Alfonso Escuadra Sánchez (ES), Institute of Campogibraltarian Studies
- ❖ *The Spanish fortresses of the 18th century around Gibraltar*
Ángel Sáez (ES), Institute of Campogibraltarian Studies
- ❖ *Fortified Heritage of Cádiz*
tbc
- ❖ *Signature of the Letter of Intent – Launch of the Andalusia Cluster*
Mayor of La Línea and Representatives of Cluster Institutions

13.45

Lunch

15.30

Session III

From Data to Decisions: Measuring Impact, Networks and Sustainable Growth

- ❖ *Balancing Tourism Growth and Sustainability: Turning Data into Decisions through Impact Assessment, Indicator Systems, and Governance Models*
Damir Krešić (HR), Institute for Tourism, Croatia
co-author **Vjekoslav Bratić (HR)**, Institute of Public Finance, Zagreb
- ❖ *European, Regional and National Networks for EU Funding*
Rafaël Deroo (BE), EFFORTS Europe
- ❖ *Sustainable Heritage Management: Green Policies for the Naarden Fortifications*
Jeroen van der Werf (NL), Stichting Monumentenbezit, Naarden

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16.30

Session IV

Applied Models: Adaptation, Revitalisation and Green Innovation

- ❖ *Theoretical Foundations for the Adaptation of Sustainable Development Principles in Preserved 17th–18th Century Fortification Complexes*

Oresta Remeshylo-Rybchynska (UA), Lviv Polytechnic National University

- ❖ *The Revitalisation of the Monastery of Santa Catalina de Montefaro in the Ferrol Defence System*

Mario Crecente (ES), Crecente Asociados – Architecture, Heritage, Tourism

17.10

Coffee Break and networking

- ❖ *Night of Fortresses - transnational model for sustainable and inclusive cultural heritage management*

Đurđa Vrljević Šarić (HR), PCI Fortress of Culture Šibenik

- ❖ *Teaching children about fortification heritage and puzzles*

Olha Tikhonova (UA), FORTE CULTURA

18.20

Conclusion

Next Steps: Clusters, Certification and European Cooperation

- ❖ *Conclusions and Outlook*

Filippo Cailotto (IT), Dirk Röder (DE), FORTE CULTURA

20.00

Official Dinner

*Restaurant: Hotel “Ohtels Campo de Gibraltar”,
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Thursday, 23rd April 2026

EXCURSIONS: Cádiz & Tarifa

- 08.00** **Bus to Tarifa**
- 09.30** **Isla de las Palomas***
- 11.00** **Castillo de Guzmán el Bueno**
- 12.00** **Bus to Cádiz**
- 13.30** Lunch
- 14.30** **Castillo de Santa Catalina**
- 18.30** **Castillo de San Sebastián**
- 20.30** **Dinner in Cádiz**
- 21.30** **Bus to La Línea de la Concepción**

For visiting Isla de las Palomas you'll need your **ID card or passport.*



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Friday, 24th April 2026

EXCURSIONS: Gibraltar (tbc) or Malaga

10.00

Optional: Guided tour GIBRALTAR Fortress (2h)
own transport, EU border, maybe passport needed

Alternative

08.00

Bus to Malaga

09.30

Malaga Airport for early departures

10.00

Visit **Alcazaba de Malaga**

13.00

Malaga Airport for later departures

13.30

Optional: Lunch (self-payment)

14.30

Bus to La Línea de la Concepción

15.00

Optional: **Fortress La Duquesa** (on way back to La Línea)

20.00

Optional: Dinner (self-payment)

TIPS:

Airports:

- Gibraltar (UK) Airport (10 min walk)
- Málaga (ES) Airport (90 min car)
- Jerez (ES) Airport (90 min car)

Accommodation

- Ohtels Campo de Gibraltar, Congress venue and hotel
Av. Príncipe de Asturias, 11300 La Línea de la Concepción

Please book your room via: <https://www.ohtels.es/>

1. Choose the hotel “Ohtels Campo de Gibraltar”
2. choose your booking dates
3. **Enter the promocode “fortecultura”**
4. continue with booking

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La Línea de la Concepción

Fortified heritage from 3 centuries in the shadow of Gibraltar ‘s rock



First came the fortress, then the city

From 1730 Spain fortified itself on the Northern border of the peninsular Gibraltar, after it tried unsuccessfully to reclaim the rock of Gibraltar which was occupied by England in 1704.

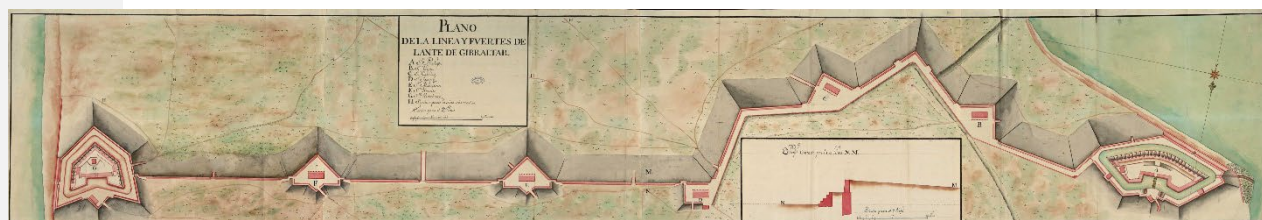
A defence line from coast to coast with 2 forts, 5 batteries and bulwarks was developed under enormous effort – the Línea de Contravalación de Gibraltar.

The city La Línea itself was not founded officially until 1870 in this location. The town privilege was given by King Alfonso XIII. in 1913.

Between 1940 and 1944 the isthmus was fortified again against the British crown colony Gibraltar. This with bunker artillery emplacement, machine gun nests, watchtowers, switching centres and command posts which were partly built on the constructions of the defence line of the 18th century.

This bunker was part of a much bigger defence wall with together 498 buildings, which reached along the coasts of Conil de la Frontera at the Atlantic until the mouth of the river Guardiaro into the Mediterranean Sea.

The extraordinary history of the region can today be seen in the modern border and coastal city. In the light of current events it again becomes very important.



www.forte-cultura.com/en/la-linea-de-la-concepcion-es