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# From Fortress to Forum: Heritage Interpretation, Art and Memory for Sustainable Development

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# 1. Starting Point



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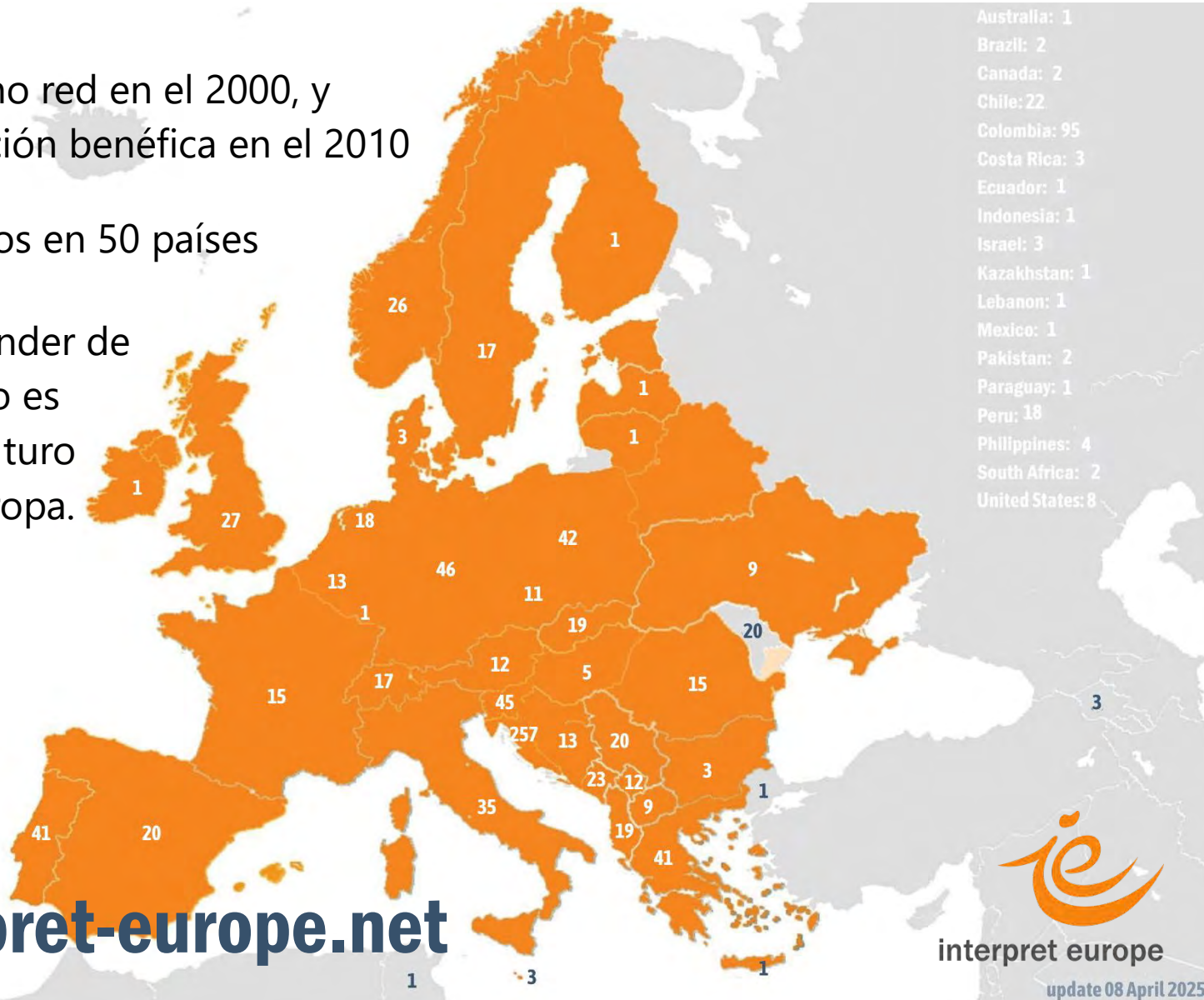
# European Association for Heritage Interpretation

- Establecida como red en el 2000, y como organización benéfica en el 2010
- 1,000+ miembros en 50 países

Creemos que aprender de nuestro patrimonio es esencial para un futuro compartido en Europa.



[www.interpret-europe.net](http://www.interpret-europe.net)



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update 08 April 2025

## Our mission

Empowering all who inspire **meaningful connections** with Europe's natural or cultural heritage to **shape our common future**.

We believe that **learning from our heritage** is essential for a shared future in Europe.

## Nuestra misión

Empoderar a todos los que inspiran **conexiones significativas** con el patrimonio natural o cultural de Europa **para moldear nuestro futuro común**.

Creemos que **aprender de nuestro patrimonio** es esencial para un futuro compartido en Europa.



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# Our goals

## Foster heritage interpreters

- Be a platform for collaboration and exchange
- Facilitate mutually beneficial initiatives
- Serve interpreters Europe-wide

## Anchor heritage interpretation at national & international levels

- Become a reference organisation for heritage interpretation in Europe
- Serve as a key partner for cooperation

# Nuestros objetivos

## Fomentar intérpretes de patrimonio

- Ser una plataforma para la colaboración y el intercambio
- Facilitar iniciativas mutuamente beneficiosas
- Servir a intérpretes en toda Europa

## Anclar la interpretación del patrimonio a niveles nacional e internacional

- Convertirse en una organización de referencia para la interpretación del patrimonio en Europa
- Ser un socio clave para la cooperación



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# Interpret Europe's Activities

- Training:
  - Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG)
  - Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW)
  - Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP)
  - Module on Interpretive Hosting (MIH)
  - Module on Live Interpretation (MLI)
  - **Module on Digital Interpretation (MDI)**
    - Scholarships for course participants
- Research:
  - E.g. Collaboration with UNESCO:  
Values-based Heritage Interpretation



# 2026 Online Symposium and Conference:



**The role of narratives in 21st century heritage interpretation**  
Exploring how narratives shape meaning, dialogue and responsibility in heritage interpretation today.



interpret europe conference 2026



## Re-interpreting heritage in the light of Faro

16-19 April 2026 in Faro, Portugal

#iecon26

### Next year, join us in... NUREMBERG!



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# Lord Cultural Resources: 'Making the World a Better Place through Culture'



**5 OFFICES**

**2900+ PROJECTS**

**57 COUNTRIES**

**450+ CITIES**

**12+ PUBLICATIONS**



# Some of LCR's Work with Fortified Heritage



Clockwise from top:

**Dresden Castle (Germany)**

Facility Strategy

**Halifax Citadel National Historic Site (Canada)**

Master Plan, Exhibition Design

**Fort Monroe, Virginia (USA)**

Master Plan, Implementation Strategy



**2.**

# **Fortress Tales and Case Studies**



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# Castle Cornet, Guernsey (Channel Islands): My first fort





Pictures: Trip Advisor contributors



**Spinalonga fortified island, Crete (Greece)**



**Bahla Fortress (Sultanate of Oman)**



**Bran Castle, Transylvania (Romania)**



**Fortress of Cattaro (Montenegro)**

# Fortresses for Art and Culture: Bard, Valle d'Aosta, Italy



# Fortresses for Art and Culture: Bard, Valle d'Aosta, Italy

## 'The heart of the Fort amidst art, culture, history, territory.'



29/11/2025 - 06/04/2026

Fernando Botero. Monumental Technique



14/01/2026 - 06/04/2026

Masterpiece at the Fort. Caravaggio, Saint John the



08/12/2025 - 08/03/2026

Magnum America. The United States



25/10/2025 - 01/03/2026

Bird photographer of the Year 2025

LOREENA MCKENNITT  
The Mask and Mirror  
30th Anniversary Tour

Sabato 20 luglio  
ore 21.30  
Forte di Bard

Available Now  
The Mask and Mirror  
The Mask and Mirror Live  
LoreenaMcKenna.com

Forte di Bard AOSTA CLASSICA QR



Bottom right: Notizie Piemonte

# Fortresses for Social Impact: Citadel of Marseille (France)



Fortresses for Social Impact: Citadel of Marseille (France)

# Watching out for citizens, 'A social project that brings new life'



PUBLIC TOURS  
WED 22 APR 2026 >  
SUN 03 MAY 2026

**VISITE  
HISTORIQUE ET  
PATRIMONIALE**



PUBLIC TOURS / JOURNÉES  
EUROPÉENNES DU  
PATRIMOINE  
THU 23 APR 2026 >  
SAT 02 MAY 2026

**VISITE FAUNE  
ET FLORE**



VISITE LUDIQUE 8-12 ANS  
SAT 25 APR 2026 >  
SAT 02 MAY 2026

**LE PETIT  
ESCAPE GAME**

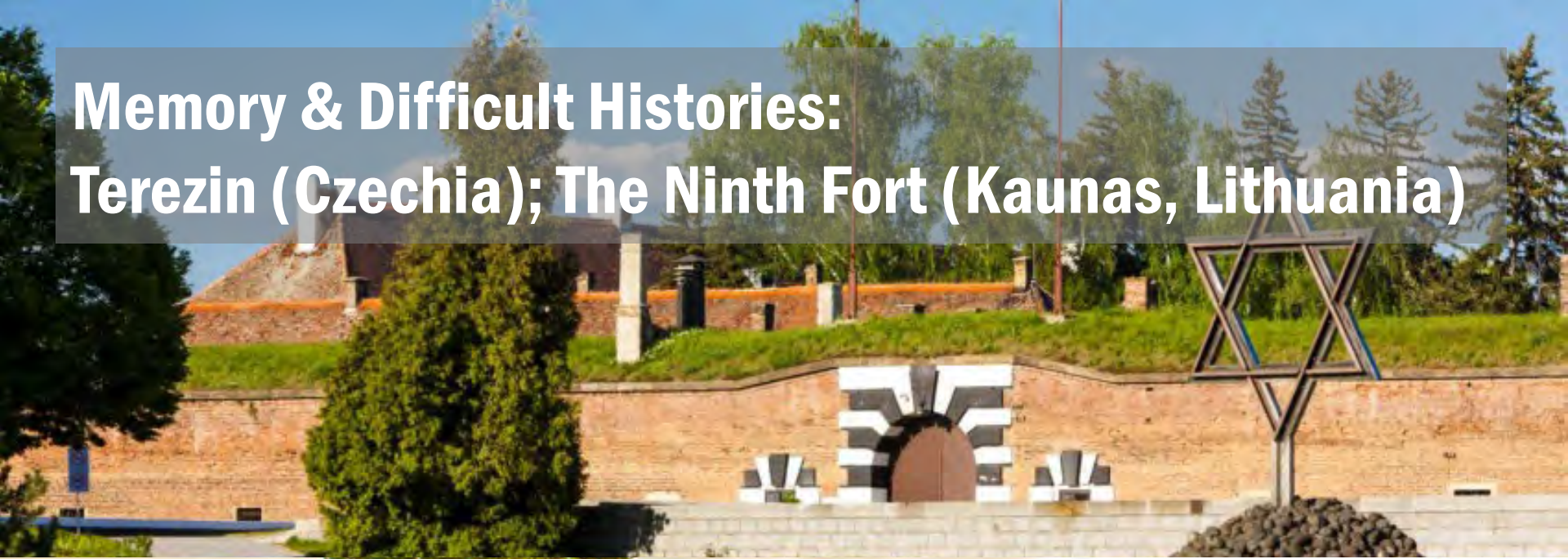


CONCERT  
SAT 02 MAY 2026 / 18:30

**OFF MARSATAC**



# Memory & Difficult Histories: Terezin (Czechia); The Ninth Fort (Kaunas, Lithuania)



# Commemorative & Military Museums in Forts: Historial de la Grande Guerre in Péronne Castle (France)



# Forts Fortifying Peace: Het Oude Loo, Apeldoorn (The Netherlands)



**3.**

# **Heritage Interpretation and Forts**



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# Faro Convention and Fortresses

Theme	Article / Clause	Key Principle	Relevance to Fortified Sites
<b>Heritage as a social process</b>	Article 2(a)	Heritage is defined by the values and meanings people attach to it, not just the physical object	Moves interpretation beyond military history/architecture; includes shifting meanings (defence, oppression, identity, tourism)
<b>Heritage communities</b>	Article 2(b)	Heritage communities are groups who value and engage with specific heritage	Encourages multiple perspectives (local, national, formerly occupied, etc.) rather than a single authoritative narrative
<b>Rights &amp; responsibilities</b>	Article 4(a–c)	People have the right to access heritage and the responsibility to respect others' heritage	Supports balanced, ethical interpretation of contested or sensitive histories (e.g. conflict, colonisation)
<b>Shared responsibility</b>	Article 4(d)	Everyone shares responsibility for protecting heritage	Interpretation can encourage visitors to act as custodians, reducing physical impact on fragile fortress fabric
<b>Heritage &amp; quality of life</b>	Article 1(a–b)	Heritage contributes to cultural participation, wellbeing, and sustainable development	Positions forts as spaces for reflection, learning, and civic engagement—not just tourism attractions
<b>Dialogue &amp; reconciliation</b>	Article 7(a–c)	Heritage should promote intercultural dialogue, understanding and reflection on conflict	Fortresses can present multiple sides of conflict, enabling discussion of power, violence, and reconciliation
<b>Sustainable development</b>	Article 8(a–d)	Heritage should support cultural diversity, economic development, and sustainable resource use	Interpretation can manage visitor flows, support local economies, and minimise environmental impact
<b>Participation &amp; co-creation</b>	Article 12(a–d)	Public participation in identifying, interpreting, and managing heritage is essential	Encourages co-curation, community voices, and participatory storytelling in fortress interpretation
<b>Expanding heritage beyond objects</b>	Article 2(a) (extended)	Heritage includes traditions, knowledge, and practices—not just physical remains	Shifts focus from walls/cannons → everyday life, labour, craft, and intangible aspects of fortress life



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# Interpret Europe's Initiatives

- **Engaging citizens** (2017-18)
- **Fostering communities** (2020)
- **Recreating tourism** (2021)
- **Empaths** (2024-now): Helping heritage professionals maximise the power of participation to co-create heritage stories with local communities.
- **Learning landscapes (2025-now)**: Capacity building for local heritage agents at UNESCO sites. Join us in 2027!



# Routes to Citizen Power in Heritage Interpretation of Forts



Community & Stakeholder Engagement	Empowerment and Capacity Building	Process and Methods
Welcoming, collaborative environment	Empowering local guides	Follow-up and testing
Narrative approved and shared by local community	Building the capacity of citizens so that they can be the agents of the desired transformation	Cross-border cooperation
Identifying community needs	Reputation of institution/ person responsible for initiative	Innovative use of historical narrative to connect people to heritage
Focus on collective contribution	Raising awareness on sustainable tourism	Inclusive open call
Capacity to merge experts' and inhabitants' knowledge		Holistic approach integrating geological, natural, and cultural heritage into interpretive experience

# Empaths Project: Aragonese Castle, Baia (Italy)



Part of Campi Flegrei archeological site, it will feature in the pilot participatory Heritage Interpretation community labs, testing out participation techniques to contested heritage narratives with local community members. This challenges the stereotype of such sites that tend to rely on academic opinions.



# Conclusions

**Heritage Interpretation at Fortified Sites works for sustainable development in the following ways:**

1. Environmental protection through visitor behaviour (not infrastructure)
2. Strengthening local identity and community relevance
3. Turning fortresses into “learning landscapes” for contemporary issues
4. Promoting intangible heritage (beyond the stone)
5. Reframing forts as infrastructures of/for peace, not war

**Fortresses can unite us: they tell us a lot about our shared history across Europe—from empires down to new towns that were created around them—, long-lasting alliances and enemies that have once again found peace.**



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# Europe needs heritage interpretation

## Europa necesita la interpretación del patrimonio

“Through interpretation, I believe heritage can contribute to the building of communities, not just at local level, but also on national and European levels.”

**“A través de la interpretación, creo que el patrimonio puede contribuir a la construcción de comunidades, no solo a nivel local, sino también a nivel nacional y europeo.”**



**Tibor Navracsics**, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth & Sport, 2014-19 in his greetings to the 2016 IE Conference in Mechelen, Belgium



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Aggràssias\_Taradh leat\_Хвала\_Ďakujem\_Hvala\_Tack\_  
Teşekkür ederim\_Дякую (Дуакуу)\_Diolch**

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