



Europe's fortified sites

PRESENTATION OF NETWORK ACTION



#weareefforts



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tooDfpr21xU>

EFFORTS Europe presentation

- I. EFFORTS vision, mission, priorities and objectives of the association
- II. EFFORTS members network
- III. Members opportunities
- IV. Members commitments
- V. European projects and actions



EFFORTS – why fortified heritage ?

- Its historical importance in **shaping European history**;
- Its **architectural assets** and engineering courage;
- Strengthen **intercultural and international dialogue**;
- Restructuring due to the socio-economic impact of departure military.
- During the 1990s: the principle of **sustainability** In 2005 : Faro convention
- In 2014 : EU Council of Ministers Conclusions on Cultural Heritage as a Strategic Resource for a Sustainable Europe “Towards an **Integrated Approach** to Cultural Heritage for Europe”.
- In 2015 :“Getting Cultural Heritage to Work for Europe” agenda for cultural **heritage-related research and innovation** up to 2020.



→ This heritage should be recognizable as a European asset. By joining forces and intensifying cooperation, sites, cities and regions can make a difference for their development.

Ia. EFFORTS Vision

“Europe is faced with complex **environmental, social, economic, mobility, spatial and inclusivity challenges** on which the EU has formulated policy goals.

Military heritage is an integral part of **Europe’s cultural heritage and identity**. Wars and fortifications have had a profound impact on Europe’s history.

Preservation and **innovative re-use** of this shared heritage is important because

- ▶ fortified sites present **opportunities for finding answers for local or regional development needs, and for strengthening intercultural European or international dialogue between countries, regions, cities and people, and for establishing a European memory based on EU’s historical values.**
- ▶ its unique architecture and engineering aspects

The Efforts motto is: from stronghold to welcoming arms.“ (dd.10/2024)



Ib. EFFORTS Mission

“EFFORTS is a European association building the **network of local and regional members** and fortification site owners, using their fortified heritage assets to share innovative heritage reuse knowledge

For this, EFFORTS and its members **work together towards network or European projects solving regional or local environmental, social, economic, mobility, spatial and inclusive policy needs and to contribute to the EU’s policy goals i.e. climate change adaptation and regional or local development, or urban regeneration priorities**, like the New European Bauhaus.

In order to achieve this, EFFORTS cities and regions promote exchange of information, sharing expertise, and **long-term cooperation** within the objective of establishing European fortified heritage reuse projects on all policy levels with other EFFORTS members, and by constantly enlarging and reinforcing the network.” (dd. 10/2024)



Ic. EFFORTS Priorities

- ▶ Creating a **European network** of cities, fortification organizations and stakeholders
- ▶ Organizing access to sustainable **funding**
- ▶ Creating **joint action** opportunities for members
- ▶ Dissemination of **knowledge**, internal and external
- ▶ **Policy** influencing



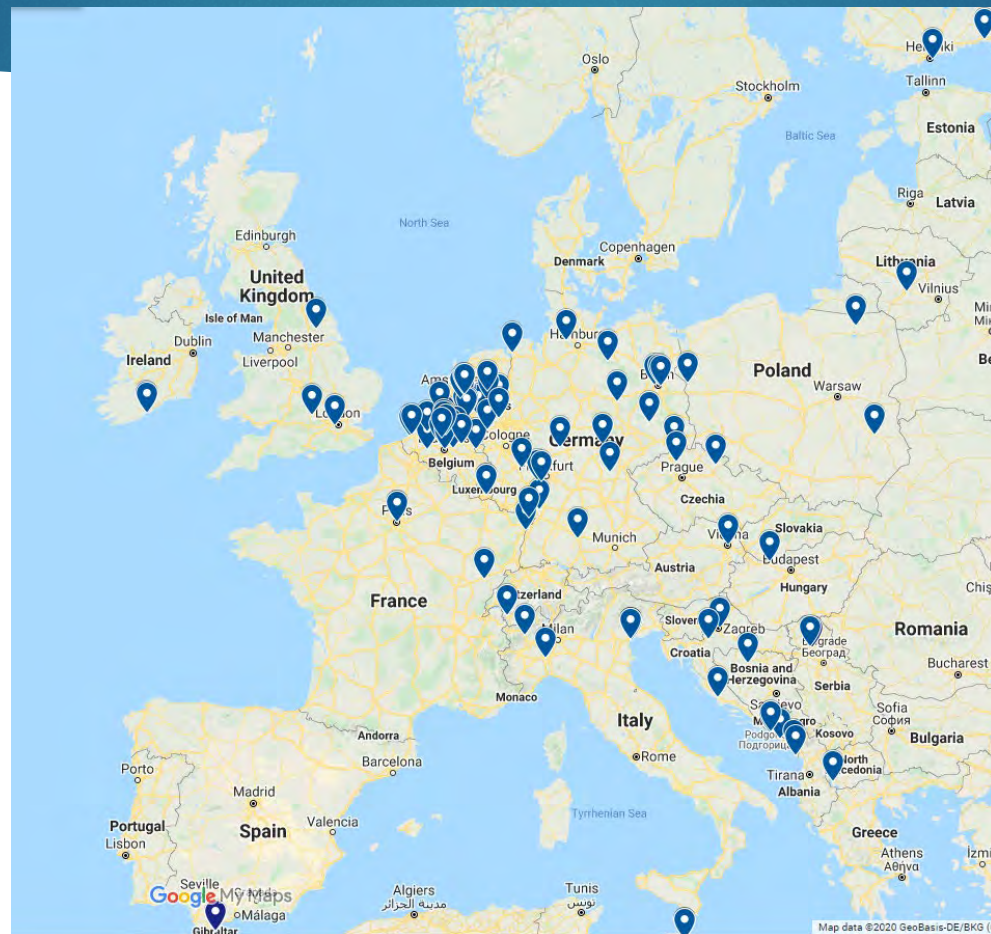
IIId. EFFORTS Priorities into Objectives

In order to **increase its capacity in European projects networking** and European position taking, EFFORTS had the following **objectives**.

- ▶ working with its members on the search for solutions for the **needs of its members on a local or regional level**.
- ▶ **creating and supporting a growing network of cities and regions**: in order to increase European capacities and capacities in the Members States, fortified sites need to find each other in a network
- ▶ **deepening its interest group role** in the EFFORTS Funding Professionals Network.
- ▶ working with each member towards a **growing community** of site owners / members committed to the principles of the organisation
- ▶ co-initiating and supporting with the members **opportunity-driven action**



Ila. EFFORTS Members Network



Iib. EFFORTS Member Network : 150 / 23

- ← Oudenaarde BE
- ← City of Antwerpen (i.e. Fort Merksem, Fort 8) BE
- ← Citadel Antwerpen BE
- ← Schans Landmolen, Kruikeke BE
- ← Stafort BE
- ← Stabroek, BE
- ← Province West-Vlaanderen BE (Atlantikwall Europe)
- ← Regionale Landschappen BE
- ← Zoutleeuw BE
- ← Menen, BE
- ← Diest, BE
- ← Dendermonde, BE
- ← Mons, BE
- ← Philippeville, BE
- ← Herentals, BE
- ← City of Namur BE
- ← Simon Stevinstichting VVC BE
- ← Garderhojfortet Gentofte - Copenhagen, DA
- ← Suomenlinna Governing Body UNESCO FIN
- ← Hamina FIN
- ← La Rochelle FR
- ← Association Espaces fortifiés H-d-France FR
- ← Cork County IE
- ← Fondazione Forte Marghera IT
- ← ISAM IT
- ← Forte di Bard IT
- ← Citadella Alessandria IT
- ← Centro Studi Medfort IT
- ← Valle Alpino and Galla Placidia line IT
- ← Terezin Masto CZ
- ← Jaromer CZ
- ← Fortress of Culture Sibenik HR
- ← Karlovac HR
- ← Fort Monostor HU
- ← Kaunas Fortress Regional Park LT
- ← Daugavpils LA

- Paola Heritage Foundation MA
- Herceg Novi MNE
- Ingolstadt DE
- Erfurt DE
- European Cooperation Center DE

- Polytechnic University of Lviv UA
- City of Ivano-Frankivsk UA
- Pidhirsti castle town UA

- 's-Hertogenbosch NL
- IJsselstein NL
- Breda NL
- Bergen op Zoom NL
- Hellevoetsluis /Op-Voorne NL
- Land van Cuijk, NL
- Heusden NL
- Oost Gelre NL
- Culemborg NL
- Maastricht NL
- City of Venlo NL
- Kasteel ten Bergh, NL
- Stichting Monumentenbezit - Vesting Naarden NL
- Stichting Menno van Coehoorn NL
- Stichting Liniebreed Ondernemen NL
- Vauban Grands Sites UNESCO Association FR (12)
- Zuiderwaterlinie cities (all 12 cities full members, NL)
- Vereniging Nederlandse Vestingsteden (20 full member cities, NL)
- Associated with Forte Cultura (all 50 members as associate, # EU member states)
- Associated members from Ukraine in 'EFFORTS:Ukraine' (8)

+International Fortress Council (13 members, INT), Fortress Study Group, Palmerston Forts (UK), Coastal Defense Study Group (USA)

+War Heritage Institute, Belgium Battlefield of Europe BE

+EFFORTS Knowledge Center Forte Marghera and ICOFORT (ICOMOS)

40 Individual Memberships across Europe (IT, PO, GR, ES, CH, UK, UA, BE, NL, ...)

Memorandum of cooperation with Liberation Route Europe

SUOMEN LINNAT JA LINNOITUKSET FOORUMI

Finnish Forum for fortifications



EFFORTS:UA
European Federation of Fortified Sites: Ukraine

LRE
Foundation

IIc. EFFORTS Membership

- ▶ **Full members** : local, regional or national public authorities or their member organisations (with each public authority -city or region- member being a full paying EFFORTS member in its own right) or private fortified site owners. Only full members can be member of the EFFORTS governing organs
 - ▶ **Associate members:** any EU or EU candidate country individual, business, private association or any other organisation interested in EFFORTS
- Partners: cooperation organisations, partners with an international / European sp work and with whom EFFORTS works on an equal footing of cooperation



EFFORTS Organisation

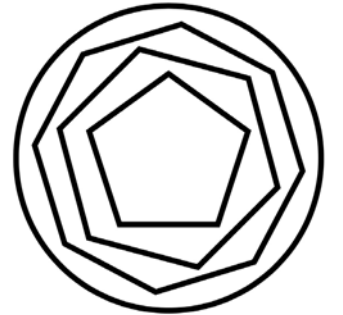
- ▶ **EFFORTS Members** : all members meet once per year in the AGM, and have opportunity to join in Members events (Congress Members Space, others)
- ▶ **EFFORTS Board**: max. 12 members, representatives of owners, cities or regions, of and from which are elected one president and two vice-presidents.
- ▶ **EFFORTS Executive Committee**: 1 president, 2 vice-presidents
- ▶ Support by the **Secretariat**: support and proposals

>>>>> The EFFORTS network is supported the **EFFORTS Fortification Heritage Knowledge Center** and the **EFFORTS European Funding Professionals Network**



III. Members Opportunities

- ▶ Working with representatives from sites and institutions, EFFORTS supports its members in :
 - establishing and giving **access to a permanent European network** of fortified heritage sites
 - **studies** on fortified heritage knowledges applications
 - **supporting members in the development of their fortification heritage**
 - understanding and promoting the **regeneration and redevelopment of fortified sites and their surrounding urban and rural landscape**
 - helping to set up **practical partnerships** between scientific experts, policy makers, enterprises and practitioners in order to allocate means for innovative development of sites
 - providing a **European exchange** of information and research and expertise on innovative (re)use of fortified heritage
 - recognizing **the tangible and intangible values and environmental, social and economic significance of fortified heritage**
 - promoting **accessibility for citizens and meaningful sustainable and green reuse of fortified heritage**
 - **highlighting and raising the profile of fortified heritage sites**

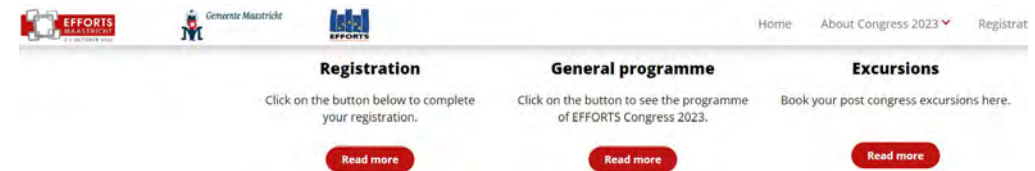


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III. Network actions

- ▶ Annual congress
- ▶ Members Meeting Space (@ congress)
- ▶ European projects set-up meetings
- ▶ Workshops, capacity building
- ▶ EFFORTS Summer Academy
- ▶ Local, regional and European events



IV. Members Commitments

EFFORTS members ownership through EFFORTS commitment, visibility and success sharing.



Members have all opportunities to commit to work loyally towards the organisation's objectives.
Members therefore:

- ▶ **Full cooperation** within and with EFFORTS on intra-Member State, cross-border or European level.
- ▶ **Membership action** : bring in (new) EFFORTS members in European projects and promote EFFORTS in national and European projects that are relevant for the EFFORTS objectives.
- ▶ **Visibility of EFFORTS** : make the EFFORTS project origin or the EFFORTS participation in projects visible on all levels of their communication and this in a non-restrictive manner
- ▶ **Visibility of EFFORTS membership** : represent EFFORTS and its interests and visuals when participating in other projects or in all communications on EFFORTS matters

Fortress connections, clusters, routes, projects

Join the **Forts/Unchained** project

Stories of forts, camps and persecution

EFFORTS Europe, together with Liberation Route Europe Foundation and the City of Bergen op Zoom (NL), on the occasion of the remembrance of the liberation of the city in October 1944, presents the call for a 2022 EU Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values




Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme



RFC
Interreg Europe
European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



3 - Forte



Interreg - IPA CBC
Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina - Montenegro
FORTITUDE



Beschrijving:

In de regio Anwerpen, van Oost-Vlaanderen tot in de Kempen, liggen een 50-tal

en een karakter. Het zijn groene ruimtes waar we kunnen wandelen, fietsen, sporten,

Ingediend door:

- Raf Deroo, Fortneerordale Antwerpen
- Coördinator iam



WELLINGTON BARRIER



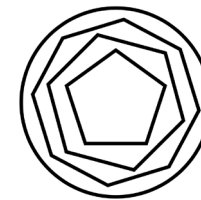
Va. European projects

- ▶ EFFORTS Goes Green (2019)
- ▶ Recapture the Fortress Cities (2019)
- ▶ Forts/Unchained (2020)
- ▶ Partner of Kaunas 2022 Cultural Capital of Europe (2022)
- ▶ Fortitude (2022)
- ▶ Reviving the Fortresses Regions (Forthero) (2023)
- ▶ Fortic (2024)
- ▶ Resilient Fortress (2024)
- ▶ Interlinie (2024)



Vb. EFFORTS Actions

- ▶ EFFORTS European Network of Funding Professionals (EFPN) (2018)
- ▶ EFFORTS European Fortress Day / Summer (2018)
- ▶ EFFORTS Fortification Heritage Knowledge Center in Venice (2019)
- ▶ EFFORTS Award (2019)
- ▶ Via Hispania (2020)
- ▶ Fortengordels Association (2020)
- ▶ Fortification Heritage Impact Study (2021)
- ▶ Liberation Route Europe partner (2022)
- ▶ Platform of Flemish Fortified Cities (2023)
- ▶ Wellington Barrier Cities Cooperation (2023)
- ▶ 'EFFORTS:Ukraine' Association (2024)
- ▶ Vauban UNESCO Association European network action (2025)
- ▶ Platform of Finnish Fortified Sites (2025)
- ▶ Baltic Route (with Forte Cultura, 2025)



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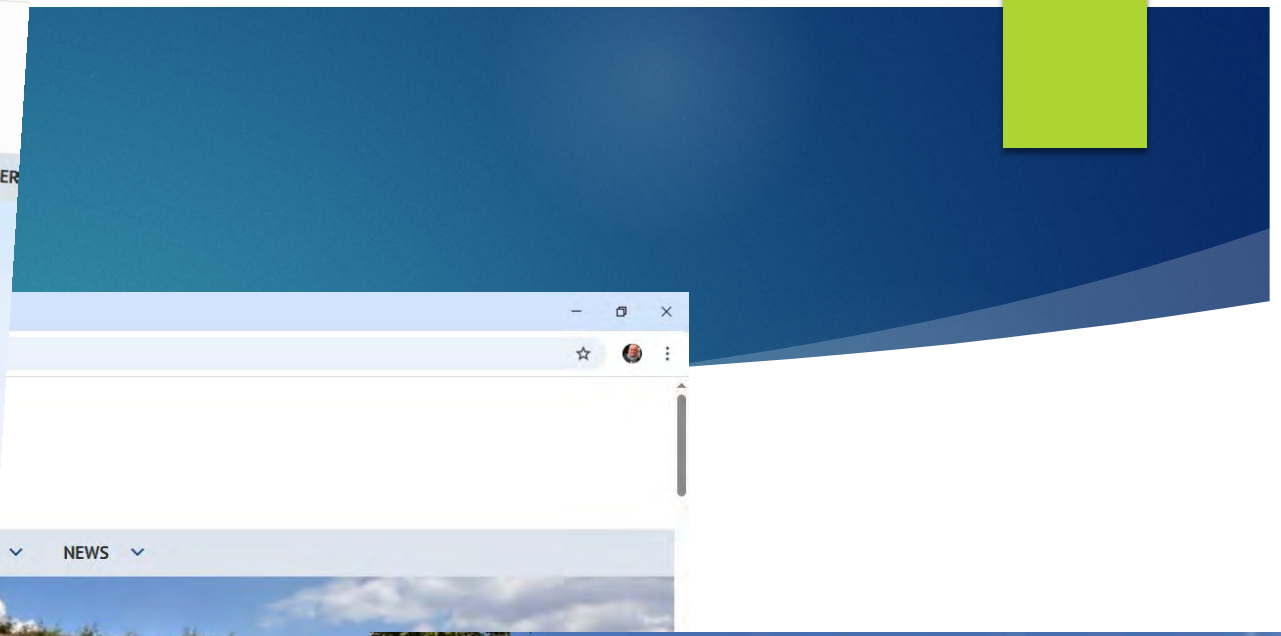
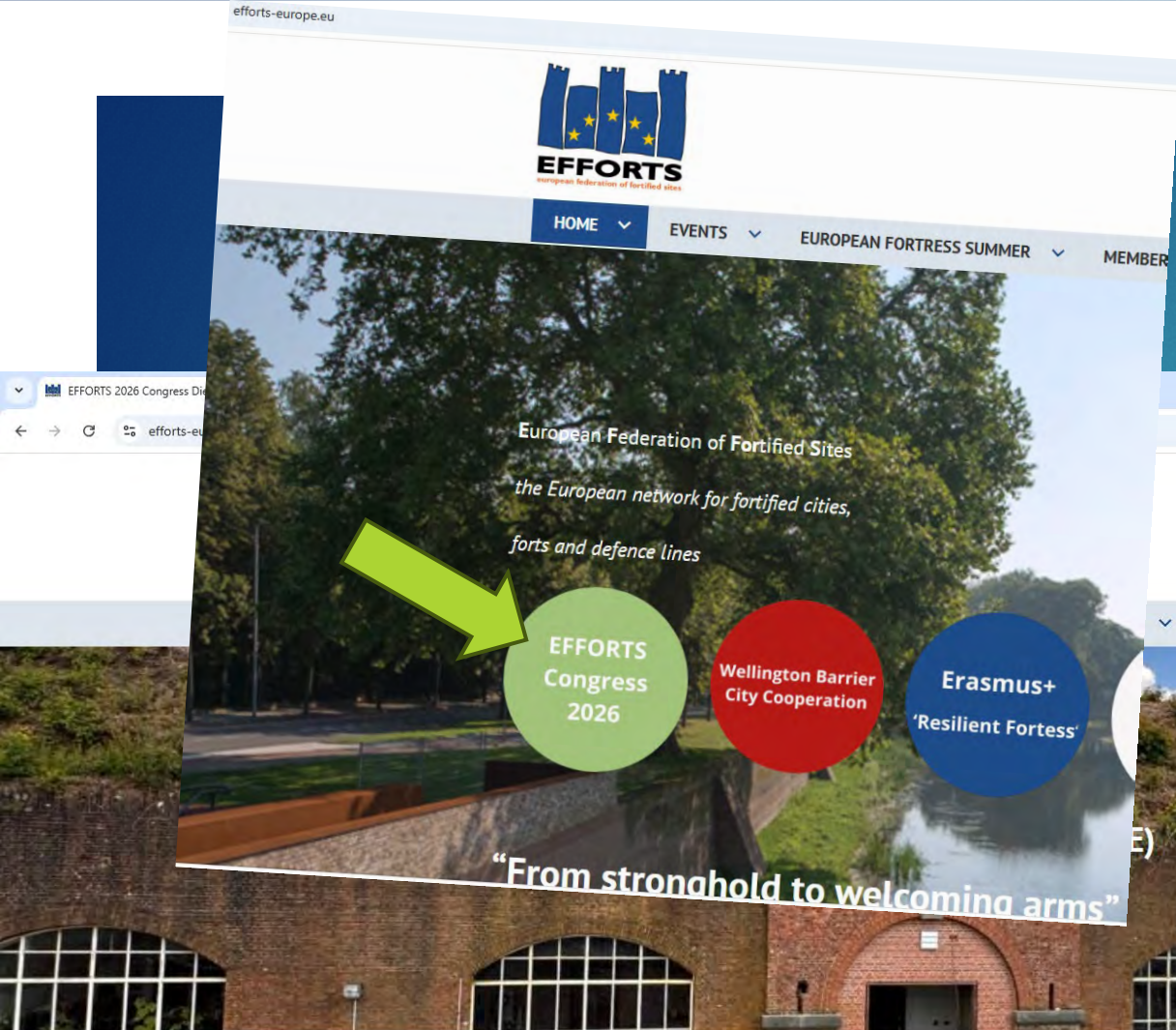


Contacts



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Fortified heritage and the private sector

Efforts Annual Congress 2026 and 4th Annual Conference of the 'Cooperation Platform of Flemish Fortified Cities'

Monday 8 June – Wednesday 10 June 2026

Citadel, Kolonel Blondeellaan, Diest (BE)

[REGISTRATION and payment information](#)



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Today, cultural heritage is confronted with many challenges that often also represent opportunities. The need for renovation is frequently limited by budgetary constraints, while renovation and reuse are sometimes perceived as conflicting approaches to the preservation of heritage sites.

One promising path lies in partnerships between public owners of fortified heritage and private partners, who may act as funders, users or both. Such collaborations can help address financial limitations while supporting the renovation and sustainable reuse of heritage sites.

These developments raise important questions about cultural values, legal frameworks, spatial planning and governance. At the same time, they reflect a broader ambition: to ensure that fortified built heritage contributes meaningfully to society, regional and urban development, and the vitality of local neighbourhoods.

The European Federation of Fortified Sites (EFFORTS) aims to address these intrinsically interconnected issues during its Annual Congress 2026, bringing together public and private stakeholders to discuss innovative strategies for the preservation, renovation, and sustainable use of fortified heritage. Diest and the other EFFORTS cities in Flanders are grouped in the EFFORTS Flemish Fortified Cities platform.





Programme

Sunday 7 June: Arrival

Informal get-together of those already arriving

Dinner at restaurant in Diest, own costs

Monday 8 June: Board meeting & Annual General Meeting (Citadel)

11.00-13.00 Board meeting

13.00-14.00 *Sandwich lunch Board Members*

15.00-17.00 Annual General Meeting

- Budget and activities 2025 and preview 2026-2027
- Board member election

All EFFORTS Europe members are invited to participate in the AGM

18.00 *Standing Dinner at City Hall, Grote Markt, Diest*

- **Keynote:** Leen GYSEN, CEO Toerisme Vlaanderen, Opportunities and challenges in sustainable heritage development



Tuesday 9 June: Congress Day 1

7.30 Run around the Citadel : voluntary free sporting moment (running the citadel and its hill steps, meet at Citadel Place d'Armes)

9.00 Congress

9.30 Welcome: Geert CLUCKERS, Mayor of Diest and John ADAM, president of EFFORTS

PART 1 Congress – Flemish Fortified Cities (John Adams presiding)

10.00 Partipatiemaatschapij Vlaanderen, BE, Financing public authority actions in Flanders and discussion

11.00 Bart SEVERI, Spatial Planning Department Diest, BE, Issues on Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in fortified heritage development

11.45 Panel discussion – The aspects of PPP in fortification heritage sites reuse

- Bart AERTS, partner Leidsman, BE
- Ion, BE
- Anouk van HEESCH, hoofd Erfgoeddienst 's-Hertogenbosch, NL
- Fort Vurig Utrecht, NL

13.00-14.00 Walking lunch

PART 2 Congress – Public-Private Partnership (Anne-Wil Maris presiding)

14.00 **Keynote:** Michiel VAN BALEN (Miss Myagi, Stadsmakers) and discussion

15.00 Flemish cities presentations on Public Private Partnership and discussion

- Karen MINSÄER, City of Antwerp, BE
- Annelies BRYSSINK, The Dendermonde bomfree barracks, City of Dendermonde, BE

17.00 Activity of choice:



17.00 Activity of choice:

- Tour of the citadel
- Walking tour of the Leopold fort park of Diest (by bus)
- Historic guided tour through the William of Orange City Diest



19.00 Standing dinner at the Citadel

Wednesday 10 June: Congress Day 2

7.30 *Run around the Citadel*

PART 3 Congress – Partnerships and Resilience (Bart Severi presiding)

9.30 **Keynote:** Mireille VAN DER MEIJ, sustainability strategist, Resilience in today's societal challenges, NL

10.30 Presentations with lead to discussion (15 min presentations and 15 min discussion time)

- Fortified Futures – the case of climate resilience and partnerships, Laurène MANSUY, director Vauban UNESCO Network, FR
- The resilience case of Stichting Vestingwerken Westelijk Noord-Brabant and Zuiderwaterlinie, Dennis van NIEUWENHUIJZEN, president ICOFORT Europe, NL
- Wartime Resilience in Ivano-Frankivsk – Public-Private Initiatives in a Fortified City, Olha TIKHONOVA, U. Sevilla ES, UA
- Future project cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, Egidijus BAGDONAS, Kaunas Fortress Park, LT, Baltic Route
- Spacial Planning in Jaroměř, Jan ZILA, CZ
- The case of spatial planning and resilience in Hamina/Kotka, Sanna NIKKI, Cities of Hamina and Kotka, FI

13.00-14.00 *Walking lunch*

PART 4 Congress – Break-out and resumé (Daniele Sferra presiding)

14.00 Break-out sessions on the main congress subjects

- Private funding and partnerships for heritage reuse: best practices (with the EU Recovery and Resilience funded Diest Citadel operator)
- The role of the private sector in climate change resilience (with the Vauban UNESCO Network, FR and Fortified Futures secretariat)



15.00 Panel discussion – Public Private Partnerships and city planning (mediation by Maarten de Winter)

- Jiri HOFFMAN, City of Terezín, CZ
- Kaire TOOMING, Heritage Department City of Tallinn, EST
- Paula KOUKI, The case of spatial planning and resilience in Hamina/Kotka, FI

16.00 Plenary presentation of the break-out sessions, discussion and final resumé

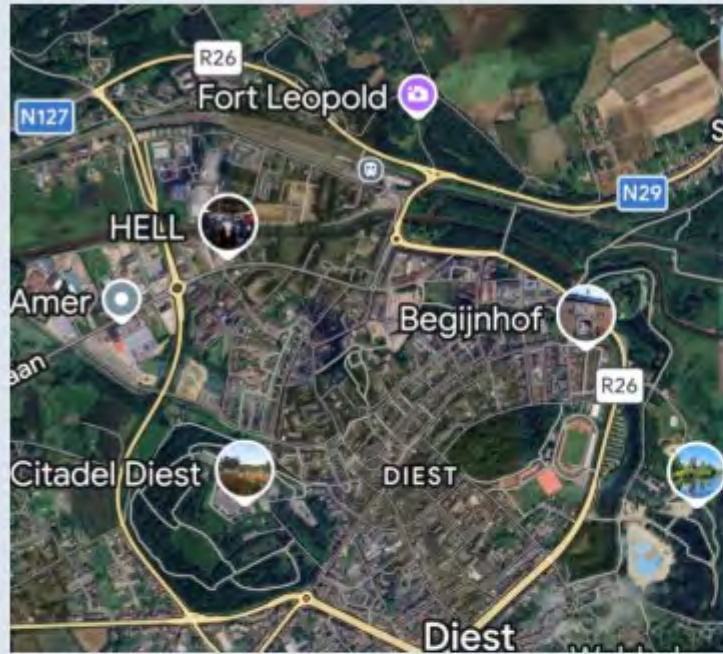
16.40 Presentation of the **2026 Annual Efforts Award** on the innovation of fortified heritage reuse and communication

16.50 Presentation of the **2027 EFFORTS congress** by the host city

17.00 End



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Travelling to Diest

By air via Brussel Zaventem and direct train to Diest (via Leuven, terminates in Hasselt)

Hotels in Diest

- Oranje City
- Prins van Oranje
- De Franse Kroon
- De Modern
- Casa della Nonna