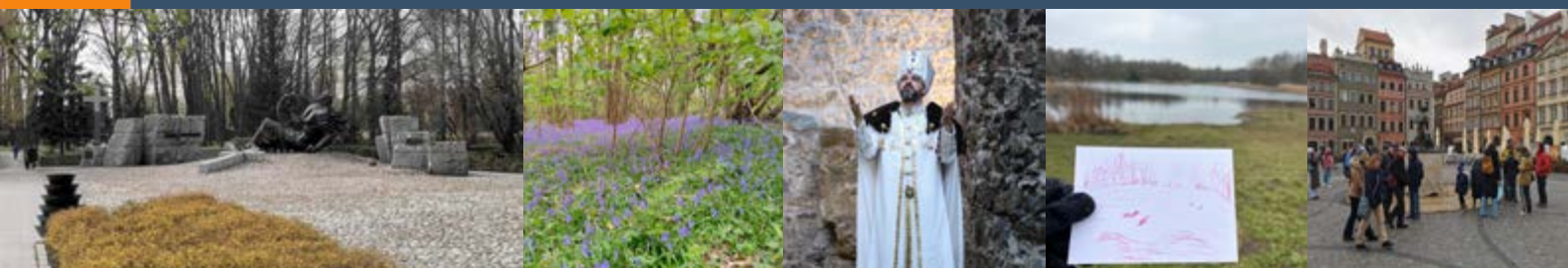


Newsletter

Spring 2025



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Dear members,

Spring at IE is usually busy with the annual gathering - the conference - and many of us have just returned from Sulejowek (Poland) still echoing thoughts on a very relevant theme: Heroes, anti-heroes and villains: How we (re)create, use and dismantle them.

If you missed out, we are happy to offer you here a chance to catch up with the main ideas and discussions shared, summed up for us by Barbara Struys (Belgium) who also reflects poignantly on the value of truly listening across diverse perspectives. You can also read parts of the speech of our guest keynote speaker Maria Luz Martínez Seijo (Spain) from the Council of Europe. Her speech revisited the fundamental roles of heroes and villains in shaping collective memory. This reminds us how non-formal education and critical history interpretation are pivotal for nurturing democratic citizenship today, especially in a world where conflicting historical narratives continue to resonate.

It is almost impossible to capture in words the lively energy and human connections sparked by workshops, keynotes, and study visits, but we will let you know when the conference proceedings are ready for you to read. In the meantime, Sacha Dench, our special guest from the UK, shares here some thoughts from her film night - a new offering for the iecon programme this year - in which she shared with us her heroic journey with swans across multiple continents.

Sulejowek was also our work venue for a couple of days, where IE coordinators met in collaborative spirit to bring IE's communication and national events forward. Our Project Manager Sandy Colvine reveals the backdrop of the activities on the HI-People project.

Don't miss the report from our strategically important project - the Learning Landscape Initiative (LLI), IE's joint endeavour with UNESCO. Vanessa Vaio (Italy) takes you through the joys and challenges of working with four living labs. Projects like these show how co-creation and local dialogue transform landscapes into vibrant learning ecosystems.

Still an episode from the LL initiative, Korrie de Boer (the Netherlands) brings us into an interpretive planning course set around a small urban pond, demonstrating that even the simplest natural spots can hold deep meaning. A similar spirit of rediscovery shines through Milica Kaščelan and Jelena Čečur's

report from Kotor, Montenegro, where participants uncovered layers of historical and natural heritage hidden in plain sight.

Meanwhile, in the UK, Kate Mechedou recounts how Medway Arts Tours in England revitalised local heritage tourism with upskilling local guides and live interpreters through IE training, bringing about their first success and happy visitors. Our members continue to push creative boundaries beyond traditional formats. Abby McSherry (Ireland) recounts the short but spectacular journey of a 3D mobile artwork that made geology come alive in the Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark. In Serbia, Ilija Jacanović introduces the 'Košava Wind Time Machine', a lively interpretive walk at Ram Fortress, where visitors meet historical figures carried through time by the ever-present local wind. It's very exciting to hear about collaborations in Scandinavia as IE's country coordinator Norway welcomes a new partner across the border in Sweden. And it is just as important to share our 'horror' stories as well as our successes, as Penelope Gkini (Greece) does - and she asks if anyone else has ever had a similar experience to hers when a figure of authority undermines our HI principles leaving the visitors with less of an experience.

Looking outward, check out an opportunity to participate in Heritage in Motion 2025, an international award call celebrating innovative digital heritage experiences, hosted this year in Budapest. For those seeking support, the Creative Europe Programme remains a vital funding source for interpretive initiatives across the continent and you can read a personal recommendation for applying to the Culture Moves Europe fund.

As always, we celebrate our vibrant community, welcoming new members and certified guides and planners who will help shape the future of heritage interpretation. Together, we reaffirm our commitment to openness, exchange, and innovation — essential ingredients as we are paving the way to European heritage interpretation! Along with the results of this year's General Assembly there is also a call to all of you to find out how you would like to participate more and have your voices heard. We look forward to hearing your suggestions.

Helena Vičič, IE Managing Director

Interpreting heroes and villains in history

Luz Martínez Seijo (Spain)

Inspired by iecon25, some thoughts on the importance of non-formal education in historical memory and democratic citizenship.

Non-formal education plays a crucial role in lifelong learning, especially in the context of historical memory and democratic citizenship. The Council of Europe has been a fundamental actor in promoting cultural diversity, human rights, and peacebuilding since its creation in the aftermath of WW2. The European Cultural Convention of 1954 and the Faro Convention of 2005 are examples of efforts to safeguard and promote European cultural heritage, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.

The Faro Convention introduces a new way of considering cultural heritage, focusing on its value for local communities and their cultural identity. This convention highlights the importance of cultural heritage in sustainable socio-economic development and the promotion of democratic values, cultural diversity, and cultural identity. It recognises that cultural heritage is a resource for developing dialogue, democratic debate, and openness between cultures.

In the current context, with the political and societal challenges of the 21st century, the Council of Europe's action in the field of culture and heritage focuses on promoting diversity and dialogue to cultivate a sense of identity, collective memory, and mutual understanding. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has recognised the important role of museums as resources for human development and citizen engagement. Since 1977, awards have been given to European museums that have demonstrated exemplary practices and stimulated innovation in the sector.

Education for democratic citizenship and human rights has always been a priority for the Council of Europe. This is why it has promoted the inclusion of sensitive and controversial parts of history in school curricula as it can reinforce democratic culture within a society and respect for different opinions, pluralism, tolerance, and diversity. However, we must be aware that delivering quality history education in schools can be challenging due to overloaded

curricula, traditional teaching practices, and, in many instances, highly centralised education systems.

The Council of Europe has developed its work on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights for decades, providing a model of competences for democratic culture. In 2016, the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) was approved, including knowledge and critical understanding of oneself, society, and the world.

Nowadays, there is a necessity to put it into practice, and this requires for the member States a serious compromise in their educational systems, together with the implementation of the new initiative of the Council of Europe: The European Space for Citizenship Education, which seeks to reinforce democratic culture through education and remembrance.

Teaching history and memory is essential for understanding historical events constructively and openly, developing the competences needed for democratic citizenship. The inclusion of sensitive and controversial issues in history lessons enhances democratic culture, as the critical understanding of controversy facilitates respect for different opinions and promotes tolerance of ambiguity.

The world outside the classroom - whether real or virtual - can restore many victims of historical atrocities to historical significance and recognition and send powerful messages of inclusion and respect for diversity. Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices help young people to make sense of the world they live in. Therefore, it is highly recommended to bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education by 'using' remembrance sites, museums, cultural routes and promoting dialogue about history in Europe, establishing partnerships between research centres, public institutions, and non-governmental organisations to commemorate sensitive historical events networks.

There can be many views and interpretations of the same historical events and there is validity in a multi-perspective approach that assists and encourages students to respect diversity and cultural difference, instead of conventional history teaching.

This is the case with the understanding and interpretation of heroes and villains in history. In Spain, contemporary history has been marked by the coup d'état of 1936, the Civil War, and Franco's

dictatorship for 40 years. Franco, the dictator, was a villain for the people who were killed, for the political prisoners, for the millions of citizens who did not enjoy liberty, for those who hardly had social and civil rights, for the losers. On the contrary, for the winners, Franco was seen as a hero, a vision that goes on. Even nowadays his death is commemorated every year by his followers, the extreme right and very conservative political groups. The arrival of democracy in 1975 was a milestone in the country's history. This year is the 50th anniversary of his death and, funnily enough, his death is commemorated by the defenders of democracy and by the ones who don't believe in democracy.

In 2006, an educational reform was approved that included the subject of Education for Citizenship and Human Rights, aiming to promote self-esteem, personal dignity, freedom, and responsibility. However, in 2013, this subject was suppressed as a full school subject. In 2014, the UN Rapporteur urged the extension of recognition and coverage of reparation programmes, highlighting the need to consolidate efforts in historical and human rights education. Memory and tools for the interpretation of the past require legislation to guarantee the inclusion of these topics in school curricula and restore dignity to the victims.

The 2022 Spanish Democratic Memory Law focuses on the recovery, safeguarding, and dissemination of Spain's democratic memory, promoting knowledge of Spanish democratic history and the struggle for democratic freedoms. Memory sites play an important role as physical materialisations of the past, helping to rationalise and soothe the emotions and memories of survivors and victims.

In conclusion, the teaching of history and its relevance for democratic citizenship education are fundamental for strengthening democratic values, combating authoritarianism, and promoting social cohesion. History should be taught in a way that fosters critical thinking and addresses multiple perspectives, allowing students to understand the complexity of the past and its relevance to the present. This is a key issue, considering the evolution and extension of ideologies that are against shared values that we have built as a European society for decades.

The organisations that were born after the horrors of WW2, such as the Council of Europe, are compromised with the defence of human rights. We must never forget that those atrocities that happened in the past due to totalitarian regimes started with hate speeches, violation of human rights, racism, intolerance... the same atmosphere



Auschwitz-Birkenau prisoners (Image: Marie Banks)

as is dangerously spread all over Europe by extreme groups.

Therefore, Education for Democratic Citizenship should be a compulsory subject at all stages of formal education and form part of vocational training and non-formal education. It is more important than ever before. Democracy cannot be taken for granted, as we saw in the past, and we see now.

Luz Martínez Seijo is a Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and a Member of the Spanish Congress. She delivered a keynote at iecon25 in Poland on this topic.

Heroes and villains at IEcon

Barbara Struys (Belgium)

Some thoughts inspired by IE's annual conference 2025 and what the theme might mean for each of us.

When I was asked to do the wrap-up of this year's conference, which took place 11-14 April in Poland, I was genuinely surprised—and I hesitated. But then I thought, "Yes, I'll do it" because it would push me to be fully present throughout the conference. I'd have to pay close attention to everything that was said. It seemed like a great way to get the most out of the experience.

Following multiple sessions, keynote speakers, guides—for four days, all in English, which isn't my mother tongue—was intense. Listening to people who, like me, were expressing themselves in a language that's not their first can be quite demanding. I'm sure I wasn't alone and many others could relate to that.

Maybe we shared more than just language challenges during the conference.

- We learned something about Polish history
- We had meaningful conversations with people we'd never met before
- We felt connected to people from other countries because you realised you face similar challenges in your work

We shared experiences.

And yet, I don't have any universal truths for you following the conference. I can only offer my perspective—my point of view as a woman in her forties, from Belgium, working in cultural heritage, who only experienced part of this conference due to the many parallel sessions and study visits that were on offer to attend.

This conference reminded me that all we ever really have is our own point of view. What we perceive triggers associations—concepts and memories drawn from the personal backpack we each carry. And everyone's backpack is different. We don't know what others are carrying. So, we experience the world—and each other—differently.

For example: one morning, I stepped outside the hotel and said, "Wow, fresh air!" The next person came out and said, "Oh, it's so cold!" Same moment, different perception.

After sessions, I would talk to others and be struck by how differently we interpreted the same speaker. So, I've come to believe, from my point of view, that if we want to truly understand one another, we need to listen more. Not just hear—but really listen. And perhaps ask questions that help us listen better, more deeply—questions that allow us to get past the walls our backpacks might build between us.

Another takeaway from the conference for me was the power of words.

This was beautifully explored during the guided tour I joined at the Piłsudski Museum. And it echoed throughout the conference—how words can empower, how they can give voice, and how sometimes, we need new words.

Take "sheroes" instead of "heroes".

Maybe history should become herstory.

Luckily, someone reminded me—we already have her-itage!

Words matter.

Last night, I called my partner in Belgium and was raving about the study visit to Basha's museum in Warsaw. He was surprised: "Marie Curie was Polish?!" So, from now on, I've decided not to refer to her simply as Marie Curie, but as Marie Skłodowska-Curie.

Words matter.

Talking about motherhood isn't the same as talking about the mothering soul in all of us.

Words matter—like the word originality in UNESCO's World Heritage criteria. If we strictly followed the Western, material-based interpretation of originality, post-war reconstruction in Warsaw wouldn't have been recognised as World Heritage. But thanks to the Eastern perspective—where originality lies in form—it was.

Words can unite, but they can also divide.

During the conference I learned that words can also limit the space for dialogue. Someone pointed out that if the Warsaw Uprising Museum had instead been called the Museum of the Polish Underground State, it might have allowed for a broader range of perspectives. Which title leaves more room for complexity?

This idea—making space for more—truly resonated with me during the conference.

As we discussed, we live in turbulent times. Rhetoric around protecting borders and making our own group "great again" dominates. So yes, perhaps striving toward a polyphonic approach to heritage,

one that makes space for all perspectives, is more vital than ever. I was inspired by Marcin Napiórkowski's keynote—and I think many others were too. But I was also struck by the questions that followed his talk.

What about views that—fuelled by social media or political leaders promising simple answers to complex problems—turn out to be racist, sexist, or divisive?

Someone said: "Yes, but multiperspectivity must be grounded in an ethical framework."

Hmmm, ... From my point of view, that's a difficult one. Because how can I advocate for values like openness, if I tell someone their point of view isn't welcome?

Where does that leave room for dialogue?

Perhaps the value of openness—which I hold really dear—means that I, as an interpreter, must make space even for perspectives that might undermine my own values. That's not easy. It's even scary.

Still, the conversations I had in Sulejówek and Warsaw give me hope. Hope that it's possible. That spaces like non-selective museums or natural environments can serve as starting points for real dialogue. For building trust—so we can keep talking, even when it's hard.

(I learned that in Poland, there's a study showing that while people may no longer trust institutions, they do still trust museums!)

Yet even with this hope, I'm left with another question: Am I equipped to embrace radical multiperspectivity? It feels like a risk.

How do I prepare myself for that?

How do I empower the guides in my museum, who are also afraid of this challenge?

How do we, as interpreters, become more like composers, as Marcin Napiórkowski suggested—people who step back, listen actively, and help shape harmony in this polyphony?

From my point of view, I hope we can keep talking about this. I'd love for us to explore how to meet this challenge together.

I will close with a quote from Piłsudski that I read in the museum. Suddenly, it meant something to me: "Only action has meaning. The best intentions are of no effect unless they result in practical consequences."

So, when we are in our own places of action—natural and cultural—let's struggle, try, fail, and try again. And let's come back together next year, to share what we've learned and to interconnect our points of view.



Marie Skłodowska-Curie (Image: Bettina Lehnés)

Barbara Struys is responsible for Audience Development at Herita in Flanders. Barbara works on heritage interpretation and audience development in the sites Run by Herita, but also supports other heritage organisations in this matter. She can be contacted at: Barbara.struys@herita.be.

The Human Swan landed in Poland

Sacha Dench (UK)

It was a privilege to add a new dimension to the Interpret Europe conference programme this year in the form of a conservation cinema night.

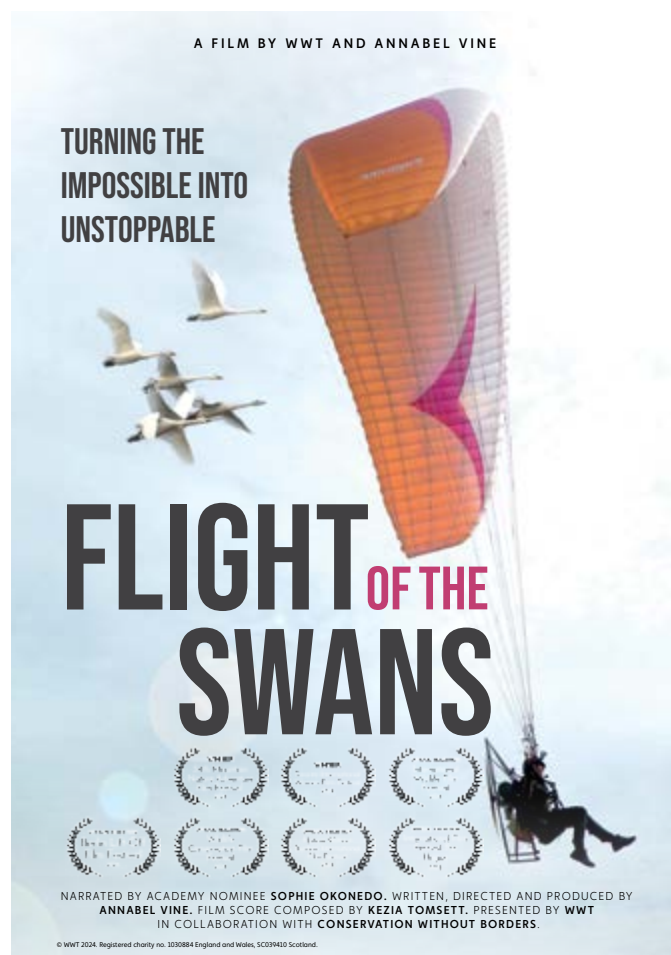
Interpret Europe's conference on 'Heroes, Anti-heroes and Villains' was brilliant, inspiring, and a rare opportunity to dive into an issue where conservation often 'shoots itself in the foot' - narrative framing - with people that understand it so well, and from different perspectives.

I shared the Flight of the Swans film about my record-breaking expedition flying the migration route of Bewick's swans from Arctic Russia back to the UK, which I undertook to engage people along the flyway with the conservation issues facing the species. In a Q&A session after the screening, we discussed how I learnt the hard way how different stories landed with different audiences, as I landed with each of them from out of the sky, or via national and international media. I shared how I learnt that anyone at the outset seen as 'villains' in a conservation problem - whether hunters, power companies, or landowners - often are the ones that truly hold the keys to the solution. You can achieve change much faster if you can frame stories so those villains see themselves instead as the potential heroes.

The conversations extending afterwards (and in to the bar) were lively, refreshingly practical, challenging and inspiring. We discussed the power of people and the stories we tell to build bridges and drive collaboration across borders when our politicians are building walls.

I came away with plans for future collaborations on film tours, talks, a potential route to funding our 'Finding your Wings' education programme and a lot of food for thought. Thank you for having me at #iecon25 - I'm looking forward to bringing life to all of those ideas.

As mentioned after the film showing, I am very interested in discussing opportunities for film screenings and/or speaking tours and would love to speak to anyone that might be interested in setting up a tour or screening in your countries. I can appear live in person or online for a Q&A session to complement the film screening and spark debate amongst your groups.



Here is a link to the film trailer:

<https://youtu.be/9YLcTq53CUg?si=Jpvt8PI7hXSZ7Nwd>

And a preview version of the full film:

<https://conservation-without-borders.notion.site/Flight-of-The-Swans-Documentary-84ffc156f28c4f459b1b732c9fd52950?pvs=4>

Sacha Dench is the CEO of Conservation Without Borders (www.conservation-without-borders.org), a wildlife conservation charity that she set up in 2019 to deliver story-focussed action to protect migratory species. Following the Flight of the Swans expedition in 2016 Sacha became known as The Human Swan and she was the Ambassador for the UN's Convention on Migratory Species 2019-2024. Sacha can be contacted at: sacha@conservation-without-borders.org.

Learning Landscapes on the move

Vanessa Vaio (Italy)

Bringing theory to life across places, cultures, and local realities.

The Learning Landscapes Initiative is making steady and inspiring progress. The last time you heard about it was probably from the international workshop in Kotor, Montenegro, back in October. That gathering marked a crucial turning point, as interpretive agents from six UNESCO sites came together to explore what it truly means to co-create an interpretive strategy—and how to turn a territory into a living learning landscape.

But a learning landscape is not just a physical place. It's a dynamic, cultural ecosystem where heritage becomes a bridge—connecting people to each other, to their communities, and to a shared future. At the heart of this process are the interpretive agents: they facilitate stakeholder networks, guide co-creative strategies, and activate certified training pathways for guides, planners, and interpretive authors.

This initiative is not about applying a ready-made model—it's about transforming theory into practice in meaningful ways, tailored to the cultural, political, and institutional complexity of each site. Each team is experimenting, adapting, and inventing solutions that respond to their unique local context. The result is a growing European laboratory of interpretation in action.

Learning together, Evolving together

Since the Kotor workshop, ten interpretive agents—supported by dedicated mentors and a committed group of international advisors—have been translating ideas into action. The mentorship has been especially valuable, helping turn knowledge into practice through real-world experimentation and open, peer-level dialogue. For many, this has been a rare and enriching opportunity to discuss the gap between theory and participatory practice in a truly collaborative setting.

Sites in action

In **Kotor, Montenegro**, agents Mileva and Jelena have shown remarkable determination. Despite some initial challenges related to local politics and the holiday season, they successfully identified their focus area and—thanks to a strong network of local contacts—organised two co-creative workshops, one involving cultural institutions and another centered on community representatives. Their Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) course followed soon after, and the enthusiasm among participants

was tangible: several committed to developing their own interpretive plans in the coming months.

In **Roșia Montană, Romania**, agents Constantin and Iulia worked within a complex and sensitive context, shaped by historical and social tensions. Still, their co-creative workshop brought forward powerful, previously unheard narratives, reawakening a sense of community connection to heritage. Their CIP course is scheduled for late April or early May.



Co-creative workshop in Rosia Montana
(Image: Iulia Balint)

In **Zagori, Greece**, progress has been steady. With support from the Ministry of Culture and UNESCO, agents Kalliopi and Dimitri initiated a CIP course in Ioannina, a more accessible city within the broader UNESCO area. Thanks to their outreach, 16 participants joined and are now eager to co-design the site's interpretive strategy—once funding is confirmed.

In the **Wadden Sea, Netherlands**, the process has unfolded with clarity and consistency. Agents Renate and Sander had the smart idea to integrate Learning Landscapes into an existing programme, allowing them to organise a successful participatory workshop with 30 stakeholders. The feedback was so positive that a second co-creative session is already being planned. The CIP course further energised participants, reinforcing their commitment to the site's interpretive future.

LLI: A living lab of interpretation

What we're witnessing is a shared learning journey, shaped by dialogue, trust, and continuous adaptation. It's an evolving experiment in which interpretive knowledge meets local cultures, navigates institutional frameworks, and deals with the layered complexity of the real world. No two sites have followed the same path—but each one has expanded our collective understanding of what a learning landscape can be.

Together, we are rewriting how interpretive planning is done. And this is just the beginning.



WaddenSea stakeholder meeting (Image: Renate Baeckere)

Vanessa Vaio is IE's Country Coordinator Italy. She founded a consultancy hub bringing together multidisciplinary experts whose creative work results in customised interpretive master plans, as well as the design of interpretive programmes and services. Vanessa is a certified IE trainer who enjoys inspiring guides, museum educators, and teachers—while being inspired in turn by the unique qualities each person brings. Vanessa can be contacted at: vanessa.vaio@interpret-europe.net.

We're better together!

Sandy Colvine (France)

IE coordinators are a cornerstone for HI-People.

HI-People is a key project for Interpret Europe over the next four years. It will build the capacity of our network organisation and members but also reach out to other heritage professionals, institutions and networks to promote the role of heritage interpreters practicing value-based and people-centred approaches in heritage interpretation (HI) as a response to some of the critical challenges facing Europe today.

That outreach begins with our community of country and subject coordinators and so we organised a first face-to-face meeting attended by some 20 coordinators following #icon25 in Sulejówek.

As part of their commitment to Interpret Europe, coordinators should organise a promotional event each year. HI-People will boost these initiatives by proposing a series of 20 national networking events over the next four years to be run by our coordinators. These are 'professional meet-ups' with a creative touch to promote IE and heritage interpretation to showcase our training but also to strengthen ties with national networks and build local partnerships. They could take the form of info sessions, training tasters, roundtables, site visits or mini-forums and involve museums, universities, parks, tourism boards and local authorities together with national IE members and trainers also attending to lend their support.

The success of these networking events relies on the reputation and abilities of our coordinators to create a buzz and attract the right attendees. Yet, just like many freelance interpreters, the life of a voluntary coordinator can be a lonely one with limited support to overcome challenges to their work.

The message from the meeting was that 'we are better together' to support one another. While HI-People represents an opportunity to energise our community of coordinators around a collective project task, they should feel ready, willing and able to play their part. That means enabling new and established coordinators to share their skills and experience to address mutual needs and solve common problems together.

So, we started a course of action in Sulejówek. The HI-People project team and IE management are working with our coordinators to provide appropriate direction and support so that they can meet at regular



IE country and subject coordinators find strength in meeting in person (Image: Helena Vičič)

online sessions and face-to-face once a year, to take the initiative to co-create their activities. This would mainly focus on getting to know each other better, feeling a sense of belonging, identifying common problems and offering support and solutions from one another. This is the healthy foundation we need for success, connecting IE management, subject and country coordinators more closely.

What are the key takeaways? It is important to be listened to, share experiences and feel a sense of belonging and togetherness. Our coordinators count, and a strong collective spirit where everyone contributes is essential for joint success, to build our community to not only play a crucial role in the HI-People project but also to support and value our coordinators' work for their own professional development and for Interpret Europe.

Want to learn more about HI-People? Visit the projects page on the IE website for more details:
<https://interpret-europe.net/projects-p/>

Sandy Colvine is Project Manager for IE and coordinates the HI-People and Empaths projects. Based in Southern France, he is also an IE certified trainer and a former member of the IE Supervisory Committee. You can contact him at: alexander.colvine@interpret-europe.net.

IE training – Solving Medway problems

Kate Mechedou (UK)

Rochester, in England, has a problem. Medway Council currently has no tourism department. IE training finds ways to increase visits.

Rochester, a picturesque jewel in south-east England, has a problem.

In April 2024 Medway Council tourism department closed as a cost cutting measure. Businesses must now be responsible for increasing visits to our towns.

Mid 2024, Medway Council launched Round 3 of 'Shared Prosperity Funding', aimed at 'levelling up' deprived areas following the Covid-19 pandemic. It was divided into three application 'strands', and Mrs Baker's Medway Theatre Company Ltd, of which I am a director, applied under the 'Pride in Place' segment.

I argued that:

- Low pay also leads to only hobbyists coming forward to do the job – for pocket-money rather than for proper reward.
- Medway Arts Tours prove that it is possible to charge visitors an appropriate fee and to pay above minimum wage.
- Both youth and diversity need to be reflected by our costumed guides telling stories of our dockside towns.

We were awarded £17,851. Of this, £9,833 purchased the TourTalk 100 system – protecting guide voices and limiting sound bleed. The rest was used for upskilling local people with the Interpret Europe's Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course and Module on Live Interpretation (MLI) training – in a first for IE training delivered in the UK.

We aimed for 15 places but ended up with seven people on the course. The course was an intense 7-day period, running from 3-9 March 2025.

The IE trainers did a magnificent job combining the CIG course with the MLI. Participants produced a range of real characters – giving insight into difficult or challenging topics, with interpretive talks on their choice of phenomenon.

Characters included: a 17th century statesman (played by a person of colour) with a backstory about his fortune coming from the slave trade; a champion female swimmer c.1900; from 1871 a chimney sweep – too tall to go up chimneys and a professional mourner; an 18th century 'lady of the night'; a 'gong-scourer' cleaning Rochester Castle and a lady milliner, making fashionable 'cloche' hats in her shop in Rochester High Street in 1920.



Medway Arts Tours characters at Rochester Castle (Image: Kate Mechedou)

All participants are now eagerly completing their 'homework', in order to obtain the final certification. In the month since training, three participants have delivered paid work, and another two have work lined up.

Thanks to the involvement of Interpret Europe, international awareness of Medway is reaching a global audience. International visitors are booking Medway Arts Tours as a result of online PR about the IE training of our guides. Visitors are also reaping the benefits of interpretive talks devised using IE methodology.

Here is just one of the reviews we have received since we started road-testing these new offers:

"From the moment we arrived we realised we were in for a treat. For fear of spoiling the magic, I won't go into too much detail. Suffice to say we would totally recommend this guided tour. A must for everyone. Our guides were passionate about Rochester and its famous inhabitants. Entertaining, knowledgeable and engaging. Thank you all so much for making our visit so special." Lisa, UK, 16 March 2025.

The next round of shared prosperity funding has been launched in Medway – so watch this space!

If you are in the UK, you can book Medway Arts Tours on: <https://www.getyourguide.com/rochester-uk-l4661/>

Kate Mechedou was Creative Director of Past Pleasures Ltd until 2020. Kate is now director of Mrs Baker's Medway Theatre Company Ltd, producing historically inspired performances, and Medway Arts Tours. Kate is a co-director of Medway Play Lab CIC and helped to write Medway Cultural Strategy. She can be contacted at: kate.mbmtc@gmail.com.

Learning the interpretive planning method at a pond

Korrie de Boer (Netherlands)

On a chilly morning in Den Helder the Netherlands, ten people stand next to a pond with dogs running between them. A good learning environment?

That's how the IE Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) course I joined started. The pond we were standing next to was our heritage for that week. The main phenomenon for us to learn the interpretive planning method. The first day was focused on getting to know each other, getting to know ourselves better and on learning the first things about interpretive planning.

The pond as our phenomenon

Our heritage that week was a small pond in the Mariëndal park. Most of the week we were working in our group to explore the area around the pond, talk to stakeholders, do some background research on the history of the pond, learning about how to come to good themes and interpretive services and cultivating the needed input for our proposal.

We learned the best ways to interview stakeholders and to learn more about how they use the phenomenon and how it makes them feel. The difference between fact and meaning was something I liked. Especially as my background is in marketing, I found it very exciting to learn more about this. On what people can feel or do when they're at a heritage site and how interpretive planning can nudge them into actions or give the information in an appropriate and understandable way.

Field research trips

The course also included two fieldtrips to do research on sites. The first one was Fort Kijk Duin. An old fortress in Den Helder which has an exhibition on the fortress. Here we experienced true storytelling and there was also an aquarium. The combination was quite unique, and the main theme was that both exhibitions touched on defense and attack (from the fortress and the animals in the sea). By walking around, we learned more about interpretive services, and about the interpretive tenet of: provoke, relate and reveal. On the last day we went to an old wharf. They restored Helderse Bidders to keep the heritage of those vessels alive. The trips allowed us to experience interpretation in real life and gave some useful insights into what works or what doesn't.



Drawing inspired by the phenomena (Image: Korrie DeBoer)
Searching for strong themes (Image: Iva Klaric Vujovic)



Completing the course after five days

The course was a whole week where we learned the ins and outs on interpretive planning. We worked on our proposal in our groups, and we got to know each other much better. There was a nice energy in the whole group. Both groups discovered and interpreted some interesting phenomena, themes and interpretive services for 'our' pond. Because that's the feeling we got at the end of the week – that we belonged there and took some ownership of the site. The reactions from the stakeholders to our proposals were good, and some of the ideas could actually be implemented. We finished the week with a delicious dinner at the nearby pancake restaurant. Now it's time to focus on our course homework – the interpretive plan for our own sites, and to demonstrate that we have learned the skills.

Korrie de Boer joined IE at the beginning of 2025 and participated in the Certified Interpretive Planner course in Den Helder in February. Korrie is senior marketer at the WEC in Lauwersoog. This centre is the new home of Sealcentre Pieterburen and opens on April 26. Korrie can be contacted at: korrie.deboer@ontdekweg.nl.

Layers of meaning: A journey through Kotor's living heritage

Milica Kaščelan & Jelena Čečur (Montenegro)

Imagine interpreting phenomena you've passed by your entire life without ever acknowledging their value or significance.

The main task throughout the IE Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) course held in Kotor during the last week of March tested participants to do just that.

The course was run as part of the UNESCO project Learning Landscapes with the aim of fostering landscapes in active learning and engagement. The Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor, as the property with stunning universal value, is a pilot project which will have to obtain the integral Strategy of heritage interpretation in the next few months.

The MPI "Museums" Kotor, on the side of the Municipality, took a part in its implementation, delegating two agents, Mileva Mršić and Jelena Čečur. Their task will be to consider the architectural quality of this property, including its fortified and open cities, settlements, palaces, and monastic complexes, which are in harmony with the surrounding natural environment. They will also have to take into account when developing the Strategy, the unique testimony to the Bay's historical role in the transmission of Mediterranean cultures into the Balkans over the centuries.

The course, run as a partnership between Interpret Europe and the UNESCO Regional Office of Science and Culture, gathered 17 participants from different fields of expertise. Over the course of five intensive days of educational, interactive, and hands-on sessions, we developed and enhanced our skills in presenting and communicating the value of our cultural and natural heritage through various methods and techniques of heritage interpretation.

The main square in Kotor, the Square of Arms, served as the central point of our exploration. Although it represents just a small section of the UNESCO-protected area, this space offered a rich setting for examining various heritage-related phenomena. We explored the key stages of heritage interpretation, learning how to assess its value and how to present it in ways that are engaging and meaningful for both visitors and the local community.

This course contributed to our understanding from multiple perspectives. Given the diverse professional backgrounds of the participants, we



Course participants in Kotor (Image: Iva Klaric Vujovic)

gained valuable insight into the importance of both cultural and natural heritage, and how the method of interpretation significantly influences its recognition and appreciation. Considering that the workshop focused on universal values and involved the exchange of diverse experiences applicable in numerous ways to heritage interpretation, with an emphasis on innovation, sustainability, and universality, this experience is undoubtedly significant for the personal development of participants.

Visiting the site of this square multiple times and observing it from a completely different perspective proved that everything depends on the angle of perception and the way a particular phenomenon is presented to its audience. The education served as an introduction to the broader challenges that lie ahead: raising awareness of the significance of the environment we inhabit, addressing the continuous and alarming degradation of this heritage, and recognising the urgent need for actions aimed at its preservation and meaningful interpretation.

Using the interpretation of the main square as a case study, and guided by the overall goals of the course, we were challenged to create an interpretation plan for a specific site of our choice within Kotor's UNESCO-protected area. This task will allow us to apply what we've learned, combining the theory and practice through thoughtful engagement with the cultural and natural layers of the place.

Milica Kaščelan is a master's student in Journalism at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Montenegro. She is currently an intern at the MPI "Museums" Kotor. She can be contacted at: milica.kascelan@gmail.com.

Jelena Čečur holds an MSc in International Relations. She has worked for ten years as a documentarist and archivist at MPI "Museums" Kotor. Her research focuses on the history of the Bay of Kotor, presenting the cultural heritage of Perast through exhibitions and articles. She can be contacted at: jelena.cecur@muzejikotor.me.

Congratulations to our newly certified members

Certified Interpretive Guides (CIG)

Jasmina Antolčić, Croatia
Irina Badiuc, Moldova
Nicolas Barragan, Colombia
Snježana Bogdanić, Croatia
José Félix Bolívar Gonzalez, Colombia
Milena Brajković, Croatia
Saul Cepeda, Colombia
Diego Cortés, Colombia
Bolivar Cruz, Colombia
Norlex Cruz, Colombia
Wilmar Estupiñan, Colombia
Vladana Gajić, Croatia
Valeria Garzon, Colombia
Graciela Giraldo, Colombia
Juan Henao, Colombia
Lida Hernández, Colombia
William Hernández, Colombia
Anita Katalinic, Croatia
Haira Kocijančić, Croatia
Romina Kuharić, Croatia
Daniel Lacko, Croatia
Saul Luna, Colombia
Diana Mayorga, Colombia
Fredy Montero, Colombia
Andrea Moreno, Colombia
Fleyder Muriel, Colombia
Dina Olarte, Colombia
Martha Ortiz, Colombia
Karen Pantoja, Colombia
Ruben Pastrana, Colombia
Carmen Quinchoa, Colombia
Rafael Ramirez, Colombia
Edwin Damián Rengifo Silva, Colombia
Jessica Rodriguez, Colombia
Maria Jose Rodriguez Roa, Colombia
Ingrid Marelny Rosero Buesaco, Colombia
Jairo Santamaria, Colombia
Šandor Slacki Matteoni, Croatia
Barbara Unković, Croatia
Yefer Urrea, Colombia
Antica Vadanjel, Croatia
Yuli Vasquez, Colombia

Certified Interpretive Planners (CIP)

Lili Mahne, Slovenia
Ivânia Monteiro, Portugal

Upcoming courses and webinars

Would you enjoy an enriching course with like-minded people and to gain an IE certification?

See below and keep an eye on the training pages of the IE website for up to date information on the next courses and training modules available near you:

<https://interpret-europe.net/training/ie-courses/ie-training-courses/>

You can email training@interpret-europe.net for further information.

Date	Language	Location	Trainer
Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG)			
03-05/10/25 (part 1)	German	Lubmin, Germany	Thorsten Ludwig
15-16/11/25 (part 2)	German	Lubmin, Germany	Thorsten Ludwig
Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW)			
postponed	Croatian	Osijek, Croatia	Iva Klarić Vujović
Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP)			
30/04-04/05/25	English	Roşa Montana, Romania	Michal Medek
Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT)			
None currently planned	Keep an eye on the website		

IE webinars

IE webinars are free for members and are conducted in English. Keep an eye on the website for further details of upcoming webinars and how to register:

<https://interpret-europe.net/training/webinars/>

Email webinar@interpret-europe.net for more information.

Don't forget that IE members can catch up on previous webinars if you missed them – the recordings are available in the members' area of the website.

Under foot

Abby McSherry (Ireland)

Using a 3D mobile artwork to tell the story of a Geopark in Ireland.

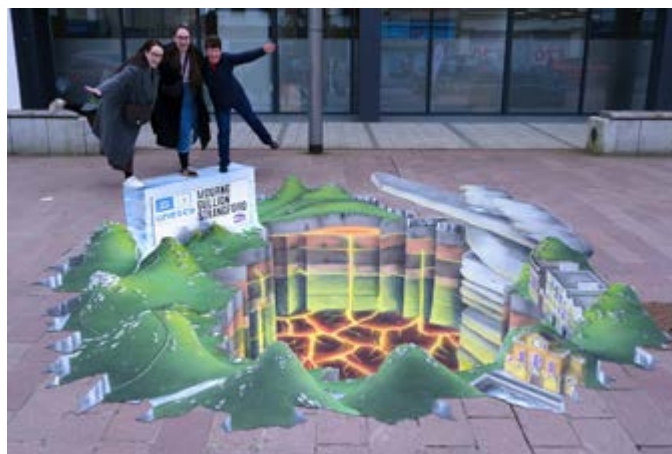
This innovative interpretive creation became a key feature of our events throughout 2024. A mobile piece of 3D pavement art was literally rolled out at every event held within the Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark <https://mournegullionstrangfordgeopark.com> in Ireland last year. However, as we prepared to launch it on its 2025 odyssey, we discovered that Storm Darragh's fury in November had caused irreparable damage. The cumulative wear of thousands of enthusiastic feet had also taken its toll, leaving it looking decidedly tatty. And so, with great reluctance, we have retired the exhibit.

But let's go back to the beginning and tell the story of its creation while we mourn its departure from our interpretive toolkit.

3D pavement art, also known as anamorphic street painting, is a fascinating form of public art that creates the illusion of three-dimensional depth on a flat surface. Using precise perspective techniques, artists craft stunning images that appear to rise from or sink into the pavement when viewed from a specific angle.

Though this technique dates back to the Renaissance, it has seen a surge in popularity in modern street art. However, such works are rare in soggy, windy Ireland, where traditional 3D pavement art—often created with chalk or pastels—struggles to survive the famously unpredictable climate. The idea of painstakingly creating a detailed piece only for it to be washed away in the next downpour didn't seem practical. We also needed something portable, as the Geopark spans a vast area, and we wanted to take the exhibit to multiple locations.

In my research, I came across an artist who specialises in pavement art suited to the Irish climate—Mark Cronin <https://markcroninart.com>. His method was perfect for our needs: instead of chalk, he paints in acrylic on the back of offcuts of flooring vinyl, allowing the artwork to be rolled up and transported easily. This approach would allow us to bring the magic of 3D art to venues across the Geopark, regardless of the weather.



3D pavement art for Geopark (Image: Abby McSherry)

The optical illusion of 3D pavement art relies on distorted proportions that, when viewed from the intended angle, create a lifelike depth effect. I envisioned using this technique to depict the underground world of the Geopark, linking the shape of the landscape to the geological processes that formed it far below the surface. A deep chasm—a classic theme in 3D pavement art—seemed the perfect way to illustrate the cooling of vast underground magma pools and their subsequent exposure through millions of years of erosion by ice and water.

Mark was inspired by the idea of showcasing the formation of the landscape, particularly the Ring Dyke of the Ring of Gullion and the Mountains of Mourne, and their deep cultural connections—from prehistoric cairns to the granite streets of Newry City. I created a storyboard with photos and illustrations highlighting key features to tell the story of the Geopark's geology and its influence on today's culture and traditions. Mark took this and added a brilliant interactive twist by incorporating the popular childhood game of avoiding the 'lava', challenging participants to balance precariously over the chasm on a favourite landmark balancing rock in the Mournes.

This mobile 3D pavement art proved to be an incredibly engaging way to attract public attention and encourage interaction. Once we had people hooked—getting them to snap photos of their children teetering on the edge of magma dykes and other geological formations—we had the perfect opportunity to share the deeper social, scientific, historical, and environmental messages of the Geopark.

The piece worked best with a human interpreter to guide discussions and answer questions, drawing people toward our information stands and stalls. However, we also found that even when it was unattended, people used it to explore the landscape's features and were entertained by it. It became a fun, accessible way to spark curiosity and turn streets into immersive, thought-provoking experiences.

Now, I just need to find funding for a new piece and, crucially, make sure it's never left outside overnight during a red wind warning! Sure, it was waterproof, but even the best materials can't withstand a Force 8 gale. Lesson learned.

Abby McSherry works for Newry Mourne and Down District council and can be reached at: abby.mcsherry@nmandd.org.

Košava wind time machine

Ilija Jacanović (Serbia)

This ancient wind has witnessed many periods in history, brought to life through a new interpretive walk.

Ram Fortress, located in Eastern Serbia, attracts many visitors with its rich history and stunning view of the Danube River. Constructed in the late 15th century by Ottoman sultan Bayezid II as one of first artillery strongholds, architecturally it represents a combination of Roman and Oriental ways of building. Nearby were found remains of Serbian, Austrian, Hungarian, Roman, Celtic and other settlements proving the importance of this location right back to prehistoric times. The fortress was completely restored, with protection of its own authenticity, in 2019, and since then it has been open for guests.

Since 2024, Ram Fortress offers a new experience with a 45-minute interpretive walk: the Košava wind time machine. Košava is a south-east wind typical for this part of Europe. It is present during most of the year, and has been witness to many important events in Ram.

The interpretive walk was organised once a week, or by special request, from May until November, and has so far been enjoyed by more than 1,000 guests.

The walk includes interpretation in the first person by five guides dressed in authentic costumes from different periods of history. These guides are positioned at five locations in the fortress and meet the guests as they walk through the gates. With these interactions, guests are becoming participants, finding interesting stories about important historical figures. But people can also see that all of the historical figures faced similar challenges to what we are facing today.

Participants meet Roman bannerman Gaius at the start of their voyage, and during the walk they have opportunity to speak with Ottoman sultan Bayezid II, Austrian hero of Ram Baron Lo Presti, Vuk Karadžić Serbian philologist, anthropologist and linguist.

Guest feedback emphasised the interaction with the guides, saying that learning this way was fun, but also emotional because you are being pulled into the life of a historical figure. They also liked the feeling of anticipation because they are not aware whom they will meet next around the corner and what new stories will be revealed.

This walk was organised by Certified Interpretive Guides from the Tourist Organisation Veliko Gradište, Serbia. This came about due to the knowledge and passion passed on by IE trainers on an IE Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course organised with support of the German Development Cooperation Agency GIZ during 2023. These guides were really delighted to be able to produce new and unique experiences for the guests of Ram Fortress and look forward to developing more exciting and engaging offers in the future.

Ilija Jacanović arrived in Ram in 2017 as a legal advisor for a Turkish company that conducted work on the restoration of the Ram Fortress, and this was life-changing. After the restoration of the fortress, Ilija changed profession, became a licensed tourist guide, and started a family in Ram. In 2023, the IE CIG course raised the level of Ilija's interpretation. Now, Ilija owns a small tourist boat and welcomes visitors from all around the world, showcasing the cultural and natural heritage of Serbia. Ilija can be contacted at: jacanovicilija@gmail.com.



Seeing opportunities and strengthening collaboration in Scandinavia

Linn Björk, Märta Gustafsson & Jessica Bergström (Sweden) & Kristian Bjørnstad (Norway)

Heritage interpretation has had a relatively slow start in Scandinavia. But recent events might heat up this exciting field in the cold north.

The international field of heritage interpretation (HI) has had a fairly short history in Scandinavia compared to other countries in Europe. In the 1980-90s, the field of 'naturveiledning' (often translated as nature interpretation) developed in the north. Denmark has had significant focus on this. However, it wasn't until the early 2000s that connections were made with HI networks in Europe. This is when notable people in the field, like James Carter from Scotland, and Sam Ham from the USA, were invited to Scandinavia. This sparked an inspiration for interpretation.

The establishment of the Swedish Center for Nature Interpretation (CNV) in Uppsala has been important for developing the field in both Sweden and for other Nordic countries during the last fifteen years. With Eva Sandberg as director, the team at CNV has developed strong connections with other Nordic countries and with Interpret Europe. Recently, CNV hosted a Nordic workshop on nature interpretation in Uppsala for participants from all the Nordic countries.

Further south in Sweden, the Interpret Sweden Network (ISN) was established by people in the cultural heritage field around the city of Gothenburg and in the region of Västra Götaland.

They have also established Prisma Västra Götaland – a dynamic regional collaboration between non-profit and public cultural heritage actors. This is now taking the lead in coordinating the Interpret Sweden Network (ISN). For the past decade, Prisma has explored new ways of working and learning together, focusing on hands-on, collaborative approaches. Prisma wish to continue to grow a co-creative network of heritage interpreters where everyone contributes and grows together. Regular webinars are planned to share insights and to discuss what's happening in the field. In spring 2025, Prisma will host a full-day co-creative event for all who want to be involved. Additionally, the University of Gothenburg is active in the European educational project TEHIC and will host an international conference in May. Sweden is taking a leading role in the field.



IE country coordinators Sweden and Norway come together (Image: Prisma Västra Götaland)

The development in Norway has been slow and steady. The Norwegian Parks Association has focused on HI from the start. The association offers Interpret Europe training courses, and runs planning projects in parks. Kristian Bjørnstad, the director of the association, is also IE's country coordinator for Norway. This year, he got a new colleague in Sweden. Alexander Baker is active as a trainer and guide in the middle of Sweden. He is an IE certified trainer.

Through our work with heritage interpretation, we're building stronger connections between our colleagues in the north. As Scandinavian neighbours, we share many challenges—but we also bring unique strengths to the table. We're excited to continue our collaboration and are already looking for suitable project funding to apply for together. Keep your eyes on Scandinavian HI!

Linn Björk, Märta Gustafsson and Jessica Bergström have worked together since 2020 to inspire museums and visitor sites in Västra Götaland, Sweden, to embrace interpretation.

Kristian Bjørnstad is the director of the Norwegian Parks Association, and is Interpret Europe's country coordinator Norway as well as being a certified trainer. He can be contacted at: kristian.bjornstad@interpret-europe.net.

A haunted house or just a national hero home-museum?

Penelope Gkini (Greece)

The highs and lows of introducing HI to a traditional museum setting. From building trust and moments for discussion to losing the magic.

There you are, in the mausoleum of the most important politician of 20th century Greek history. His home. One of his houses. As an interpretive guide.

You tried hard to explain what heritage interpretation does and which goals it serves, in this small Greek town, where everything is connected to these proud origins of this Greek statesman that doubled the dimensions of Greek national territory. You know this is the bastion of this political hero and his descendants.

And there you are, feeling stressed, with your first group of visitors, after the museum has consented to let you try heritage interpretation, after your tour has been tested and approved by the employees.

After an hour, you are almost at the end of your performance. You tried to bring the visitors closer to heritage, closer to each other, so you can encourage discussion on several issues.

You know that the museum educator is watching you. Another unknown man is entering and leaving the group whenever he wants. You see him speak to the local employees of the museum, and they know him. But you don't. You are curious about this participant.

You have unlocked the visitors. As you continue the tour, they are talking about the events and their relation to this historical moment. They make connections between the past and the present. You take them to the upper floor, where you are going to go deeper into your story. And finally, you arrive at the point where it is appropriate to talk in more detail about the political history of the 20th century. Everybody is waiting to discuss politics. Finally, one visitor brings up the issue: The Great Division, a very traumatic moment in Greece that has defined the future of many generations and that many people hold this national hero responsible for.

You take a big breath. You are ready to ask other people's opinions. You knew that this may come up and that you want to avoid big conflicts or even silence. But before you can respond, the unknown



A hero's home (Image: Penelope Gkini)

man takes a step into the centre of the group, raises his hands and starts to talk. He is the political scientist of the museum and delivers a monologue of six minutes that seems endless. He doesn't look at the reaction of the visitors. He isn't listening. He wants only to tell the official opinion of the Foundation that manages the museum. Passionate as he is, and dense in information, at the end of his speech the visitors just look at him, astonished, curious, speechless maybe also in admiration.

Then... Silence. The visitor who had brought up the subject doesn't respond. Everything that you were trying for – openness, flexibility, embracing people's questions, lived experiences, knowledge, memories – has been dismantled and the magic connection created between people where they felt safe to open discussions has been lost.

Was it an interpretive guide's nightmare? Was it a horror movie scene?

Or was it a taster of Interpret Europe's 2025 Conference about Heroes, anti-heroes and villains: How we (re)create, use and dismantle them?

Penelope Gkini is an IE certified interpretive guide and trainer and works in Crete, Greece, through her company Porizo that means to go outdoors. If you had any similar experiences, Penelope would love to read them. Contact her at: Porizocrete@gmail.com.

What's going on elsewhere?

Take part in Heritage in Motion 2025

Mateja Kuka Brkić (Croatia)

Do you create digital experiences that engage and inspire audiences? Heritage in Motion Awards invites you to showcase your work.

Heritage in Motion (HIM) is an international award celebrating innovative multimedia projects that interpret, preserve, and promote cultural heritage. Since 2014, it has recognised the most creative uses of technology in heritage projects, from immersive digital experiences to compelling audiovisual storytelling.

Who can participate?

If you are creating heritage-related digital experiences that are as thrilling as they are meaningful, we invite you to share your expertise with a global audience. HIM invites cultural institutions, producers, creators, filmmakers, and digital content developers from all over the world to submit their projects.

Award categories

You can submit projects in four categories:

- New Digital Experiences - for immersive and interactive experiences in museums, historical sites, and other heritage spaces
- Virtual and Augmented Reality - for the use of VR and AR as powerful tools to explore, interpret, and engage with heritage
- Heritage Audiovisuals - for outstanding audiovisual works that bring heritage stories to life
- Heritage Schools - for projects created by young creators (ages 15-25) exploring heritage

HIM 2025 is open to projects completed after 1 January 2023. Don't miss the opportunity to showcase your work to an international audience.

How and when to apply

Applications are open from 12 March to 15 June 2025 via FilmFreeway: <https://filmfreeway.com/HeritageinMotion>

The entry fee is €100 for standard projects (first three categories) and €50 for student projects (Heritage Schools project)

The award ceremony

The award ceremony will take place on Friday, 26 September 2025, at the Money Museum in Budapest, followed by a workshop on new technologies in heritage interpretation, preservation, and promotion.

The organisers

Heritage in Motion is organised by the European Museum Academy & Forum of Slavic Cultures. More info about the Heritage in Motion Award can be found here: <https://europeanmuseumacademy.eu/heritage-in-motion-award/>

For any questions please contact: info@fsk.si

Looking forward to seeing your projects!

Mateja Kuka Brkić is an art historian and anthropologist. Working at Muze/Muses in Croatia, she has been managing heritage projects that utilise innovative media since 2018. She's joining the Heritage in Motion jury for the first time this year. You can reach her at: mateja.kuka@muze.hr.



(Image: European Museum Academy and Forum of Slavic Cultures)

Creative Europe Programme

IE News Team

Several IE members have been successful through this programme.

Have you been awarded funding? How was your experience and what have you achieved with the grant? Let us know so other members can feel inspired to apply and maybe build collaborations between members through using the funding to deliver joint initiatives.

The current calls for projects under Culture and Creativity are only open until 13 May 2025 so it is a little late now for this round - unless you are a speedy bid writer! - but take a look at the link below for further information, and keep an eye here for news of any other funding opportunities coming up.

<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/2025-creative-europe-call-for-european-cooperation-projects-open>

If you know of any opportunities that other IE members might benefit from, let us know and we can publish it here and through other channels. Thanks!



(Image: Creative Europe - Culture and Creativity)

Culture Moves Europe

IE Office Team

Individual Mobility Funding: A firsthand experience.

IE's Office Manager recently participated as a grantee in the Culture Moves Europe programme — an excellent opportunity for creative practitioners, museologists, artists, and professionals working in the cultural sector.

Through this funding, a study visit was organised to the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, Sweden — the country's largest art museum and one of the oldest in Europe, originally founded in 1792. The museum houses an extensive collection of paintings, sculptures, drawings, and applied arts from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century.

The focus of the visit was to learn more about the museum's educational programmes, including: Adult workshops, Accessibility initiatives, and Collaboration with schools. The visit also included participation in Kulturnatt Stockholm ('Culture Night'), a major citywide event during which museums remained open until midnight, offering free admission and a diverse array of activities for visitors.

The experience offered a deeper understanding of the educational, accessibility, and community engagement programmes run by one of Europe's most prestigious museums.

Culture Moves Europe supports the mobility of artists and cultural professionals across all 40 Creative Europe countries. It covers the sectors of architecture, cultural heritage, design and fashion design, literature, music, performing arts, and visual arts. With a budget of €21 million for its first phase (2022–2025), it is the largest European mobility scheme for the cultural sector to-date. It is funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union and implemented by the Goethe-Institut.

The next phase of Culture Moves Europe is expected to launch in mid-2025. More information will be available on the European Commission website:

<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/creative-europe-culture-strand/culture-moves-europe>

IE announcements

General Assembly - IE needs your voice!

IE News

IE's General Assembly took place on 11 April ahead of the start of this year's annual conference.

All members were invited to attend and an online option was available for anyone who couldn't make it to Poland to be there in person.

Helena provided an overview of the annual report from the management and we heard about the activities that have been keeping IE busy, and which will continue to keep IE busy for the coming years - a highlight of which is the success in securing funding for two large new projects to bring IE's HI ethos further prominence in the sector across Europe and beyond. It was a nice summary to celebrate positive achievements and advancement in IE's growing reach and reputation, including working with UNESCO.

Two members of the supervisory committee - Eva Sandberg (Chair) and Yael Bamberger - were up for re-election and both were voted in to remain.

Sandy Colvine has recently stepped down from the supervisory committee to take up the position of project manager for the HI-People and Empaths projects, which left space for some new nominees.

Two new candidates had previously been proposed to all members and we had the chance to hear from them in person before voting. Gerald Wagenhofer and Barbara Gołębiowska were both voted in to take up positions on the SC. You will be able to read more about them soon on the IE website. We thank them for their service and look forward to hearing more of their thoughts and guiding support for the management and coordinators.

<https://interpret-europe.net/our-structure-and-bodies/supervisory-committee/>

There were no special motions proposed ahead of the GA so no discussion or voting was required on any changes to the constitution, but the floor was - as always - open to members after the formalities and some brief discussions were started.

Does attending the AGM sound boring and not worth your time?

The number of members attending the GA has been getting smaller year on year, even with the opportunity now to attend online rather than in person. **This is a reminder that Interpret Europe is a members' organisation and YOUR voice matters!**

The GA is a great way to stay in touch more with what is happening in the organisation, and have a voice to help shape the activities of the organisation - IE needs its members to be heard!

Send any ideas for how to make future AGMs more interesting to you and inspiring for others to: mail@interpret-europe.net. We look forward to hearing your suggestions and seeing more of you join us next year.



The view from the 'Zoom room' - Being present from a distance (Image: Marie Banks)

Welcome new members

Institutional members

Society for the Protection of Biodiversity of Thrace, Greece

Business members

Oikom Ltd, Greece

Waddensea Travel, Germany

Individual members

Mia Adamović, Albania

Lukáš Adásek, Czech Republic

André Afonso, Portugal

Alisa Amali, Slovenia

Tasos Anestis, Greece

Vasiliki Antoniou, Greece

Luciano Arias, Croatia

Muhamed Avdić, Croatia

Katharina Bach, Germany

Aurelia Bachorikova, Slovakia

Ani Badurina Manestar, Croatia

Stephanie Bähler, Germany

Jasmina Bajo, Montenegro

Tatjana Balja, Croatia

Karin Baloh Martić, Croatia

Marijke Barhorst, Netherlands

Snježana Barić-Šelmić, Croatia

William Barnard, United Kingdom

Zdravko Baselli, Croatia

Matti Baten, Netherlands

Tea Batinic, Croatia

Ranko Bautović, Croatia

Lidija Begić, Croatia

Marija Aleksandra Bel Dajković, Croatia

Bernarda Bele, Slovenia

Dražen Berlančić, Croatia

Matilda Besjedica, Croatia

Aleksandra Biela, Poland

Lolita Bizzarri, Italy

Ivana Bjelica, Montenegro

Sarah Blacker-Barrowman, United Kingdom

Klara Bogović Erdoğdu, Croatia

Joana Braga Da Conceição, Portugal

Josip Brajković, Croatia

Viktorija Briševac, Croatia

Dunja Brnic, Croatia

Josip Buljan, Croatia

Nikica Bušljeta, Croatia

Gianni Bužleta, Croatia

Ana Calderini, Croatia

Emanuel Catarino, Portugal

Jelena Ceur, Montenegro

Kornilia Chalkidi, Greece

Monika Chrenkova, Slovakia

Želja Cilenšek Bončina, Slovenia

Antonio Consoli, Italy

Pedro Cordeiro, Portugal

Individual members (continued)

Rui Simão Costa, Portugal

Jelica Čučević, Croatia

Lina Cvitković, Croatia

Korrie De Boer, Netherlands

Simona Dobravac, Croatia

Renata Dossi, Croatia

Petra Draskovic Pelc, Slovenia

Lydia Drolia, Greece

Danijel Drpić, Croatia

Helena Džin, Croatia

Ivona Eck, Croatia

Vasiliki Faki, Greece

Letizia Filippini, Italy

Mario Finocchi, Italy

Eirini Fotia, Greece

Kallirroï Fotiou, Greece

Josip Franić, Croatia

Sara Freire, Portugal

Norma Fressel, Croatia

Diana Gabriel, Portugal

Joanne Gale, United Kingdom

Natasa Gobovic, Montenegro

Jordan Grgurač, Croatia

Franka Gržin, Croatia

Annalisa Guaraldo, Italy

Jehad Haron, Albania

Mikael Gb Horstmann, Germany

Luka Horvat, Croatia

Romana Hrabric, Croatia

Ines Hudobec, Croatia

Irena Hunjadi Machado, Croatia

Dimitrios Ioannidis, Greece

Matija Ivanetić, Croatia

Vladimir Ivić, Croatia

Rebeka Jambrovič, Slovenia

John Jolly, United Kingdom

Ana Josipović, Croatia

Dragica Jović, Croatia

Antonija Jurković, Croatia

Jovana Kapetanovic, Montenegro

Matija Karmelić, Croatia

Milica Kaščelan, Montenegro

Vedran Katalinić, Croatia

Nikolaos Kazoukas, Greece

Květa Kicková, Slovakia

Georgia Kitsaki, Greece

Nevenka Klun, Slovenia

Marija Knežević, Montenegro

Dragana Kojičić, Serbia

Katja Konečnik, Slovenia

Janez Konečnik, Slovenia

Ariana Koši, Albania

Olga Kostoula, Greece

Dimitra Kotsia, Greece

Panagiota Koutsoukou, Greece

Marija Kragić, Croatia

Kristina Krapić, Croatia

Individual members (continued - again)

Ljubica Krivokapic, Montenegro
Ivana Krivokapić, Montenegro
Karolina Krueger, Poland
Blanka Kufner, Croatia
Renata Kuharić, Croatia
Toni Kuzek, Croatia
Petra Kužnik, Slovenia
Iva Labas, Croatia
Andrea Laurenzano, Italy
Ivana Lemezina, Croatia
Tânia De Jesus Leonor Lopes, Portugal
Klaudija Leverić, Croatia
Sandra Lorenzin, Croatia
Carla Lousão, Portugal
Marijan Lukić, Croatia
Carla Machado, Portugal
Marina Mahmić, Croatia
Vesna Malnar Memedović, Slovenia
Marjana Marasović, Croatia
Mario Marcos, Portugal
Danijela Martić, Croatia
Ruth Matičević, Croatia
Susan Mattocks, United Kingdom
Kathryn Mechedou, United Kingdom
Nathan Melić, Croatia
Jana Menkynová, Slovakia
Ela Mihalj, Croatia
Sladjana Mijanovic, Montenegro
Mihovil Mijolović, Croatia
Mirela Miletic, Croatia
Mihovila Milin, Croatia
Marko Miloš, Croatia
Marijana Milovac, Croatia
Aleksandra Momčilović Jovanović, Serbia
Sílvia Mourão, Portugal
Mileva Mrsic, Montenegro
Az Mumin, United Kingdom
Florentina Murea-Matache, Romania
Jasminka Najcer Sabljak, Croatia
Alen Nekić, Croatia
Jelena Odalović, Montenegro
Marilia Oliveira, Croatia
Ajda Ožbolt, Slovenia
Dimitra Panou, Greece
Iva Papic, Croatia
Iva Parić, Croatia
Lena Pasinovic, Montenegro
Daniela Peresso, Malta
Giovanna Petrone, Italy
Danijela Petrovic Jablan, Montenegro
Marija Petry, Croatia
Rok Piletic, Slovenia
Kristýna Pinkrová, Czech Republic
Duarte Pinto, Portugal
Toni Podmanicki, Croatia
Tomaž Poje, Slovenia
Špela Polak Bizjak, Slovenia

Individual members (continued - even more!)

Joke Pouliart, Germany
Janke Prins, Netherlands
Fernanda Quaglia, Italy
Tea Radošević, Croatia
Jelena Radunovic, Montenegro
Zvonimir Rajković, Croatia
Alisa Ramakic, Croatia
Mirna Sabljar, Croatia
Sonja Sacco, Croatia
Mónica Salgado, Portugal
Rui Santos, Portugal
Nerina Sarkotić, Croatia
Jasmina Šegon, Croatia
Andreja Senegačnik, Slovenia
Raul Silva, Portugal
Lana Skender, Croatia
Urška Škodnik, Slovenia
Ida Skoko, Croatia
Nina Skoko, Croatia
Mirela Slovníkar, Montenegro
Josip Smernić, Croatia
Tomaž Šneler, Slovenia
Martina Špralja, Croatia
Kalliopi Stara, Greece
Sofia Stara, Greece
Danijela Štefan, Croatia
Karmen Štifanić, Croatia
Goran Stjepić, Croatia
Dina Stober, Croatia
Barbara Stupan, Slovenia
Irene Šugar, Croatia
Artemis Talioura, Greece
Laura - Melpomeni Tapini, Greece
Dorotea Telarović, Croatia
Vasiliki Diamanti Theodoraki, Greece
Aleksandra Tomović, Montenegro
Daniel Troha, Slovenia
Margareta Turkalj Podmanicki, Croatia
Maria Vasdeki, Greece
Dejan Veranič, Albania
Francesco Verzulli, Italy
Lucijan Vesely, Croatia
Andela Višić, Croatia
Tomislav Volarić, Croatia
Nikolina Vuković, Croatia
Laura Zaharia, Romania
Marina Zanni, Greece
Wilhelmina Zelić Debeljak, Croatia
Miljan Zivkovic, Montenegro
Paris Zografos, Greece
Sandra Zubcic, Croatia
Priscila Zumpano Martinović, Croatia

Welcome new coordinators & staff

Alexander Baker - Country Coordinator Sweden



I have a master's degree in philosophy and a deep passion for nature. I have dedicated my career to bridging the gap between people and the world we live in — both its natural and cultural heritage.

My journey began as a glacier guide in Iceland, where I witnessed firsthand the impact of climate change. This experience led me to search for a more sustainable way to guide, ultimately bringing me to Sweden, where I founded Outdoor Guides of Bergslagen in 2018. It was there that I discovered heritage interpretation, which gave deeper meaning to my interactions with mass tourism.

For me, interpretation is about creating understanding — not just of nature and cultural heritage but of our own place within them. Through storytelling, especially story-sharing, and hands-on experiences, I strive to inspire curiosity, responsibility, and, most importantly, hope.

What do I want to achieve as a country coordinator in Sweden? I want to help more people understand interpretation and why natural and cultural heritage matters. I want to spread the knowledge of how to use interpretation to communicate the things that are important in trying to make people more aware and more active in the decisions they make in their lives. Thereby showing how we can make a positive difference.

Irina Ban - Country Coordinator Croatia



I gained an MA in philosophy and comparative literature at the University of Zagreb, subjects chosen out of pure love and passion for exploration of the human condition, ideas and creative impulses. I then found my first job in the Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography in Zagreb. When I started my PhD, I assured myself that life among books and archives was for me but, after a while, my life stream took me elsewhere, opening up a whole new world of destination management in the field of niche travel within cultural tourism. That is why I now feel in love with heritage as the true sense of the place, its tangible and intangible goods, its palpable phenomena and the illusive magic of humans who preserve, continue, transmit and generously share the skills, knowledge and stories.

Having gained some life experience, I am sure that heritage and culture are what can save our national identity and increase our respect for ourselves and others. I believe that we need to build communities aware of tangible and intangible national, European and World heritage and accept our responsibility for nourishing its values.

As a national coordinator, I will focus on activities dedicated to strengthening and connecting the membership of IE, which is really large in Croatia, and on giving more visibility to the methodology and training courses of IE.

You can find out more about our new coordinators and all of IE's country, subject and managing coordinators on the website:
<https://interpret-europe.net/our-structure-and-bodies/>

Ilaria Scarmagnan- Part-time Project Assistant



Ilaria works closely with IE's Managing Director and the Project Manager in the development and implementation of two European projects, namely HI-People (2025-2029) and Empaths (2025-2027). In addition, she supports the IE office with the drafting of contextual and financial reports as well as the management of strategic communication plans.

Ilaria lives in Verona (Italy) and holds a master's degree in public and cultural diplomacy. She has an international background and professional experience in European cross-border cooperation focusing on interdisciplinary projects.

She worked in the Culture unit of UNESCO Office in Venice, where she helped with the organisation of a series of workshops on enhancing synergies among UNESCO Designated Sites (Global Geoparks, Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites) in Europe. During this experience, she became familiar with IE's mission and activities thanks to a strong collaboration with its office.

Ilaria is passionate about sustainable solutions for scaling up heritage interpretation through digital devices. She is also committed to raising awareness of knowledge and appreciation of those inner values, a sense of belonging and personal enrichment that are rooted in heritage and that only a holistic experience can bring. To this end, Ilaria believes she will be able to support the growth of the IE community and network while finding opportunities for professional development in heritage interpretation.

Further announcements

Upcoming events

Keep an eye on the IE website for details of international heritage interpretation events that we are aware of: <https://interpret-europe.net/ie-events-calendar/category/other-events/>

NAI 2025 International Conference

5-9 May 2025

Morocco

<https://nai-us.org/IntlConference/IntlConference/Home.aspx>

Tactile Reading & Graphics Conference

2-4 June 2025

Amsterdam, Netherlands

<https://tactilereading.yellenge.nl/>

Eighteenth International Conference on the Inclusive Museum

15-17 September 2025

University of San Jorge, Spain

<https://onmuseums.com/2025-conference/program>

6th European Ranger Congress

5-9 October 2025

Piatra Craiului National Park, Romania

<https://www.europeanrangers.org/event/save-the-date-6th-european-ranger-congress/>

AHI 50th anniversary conference

8-10 October 2025

Cardiff, UK

<https://ahi.org.uk/conference-2025/>

NEMO European museum conference

26-28 October 2025

Horsens, Denmark

<https://www.ne-mo.org/news-events/nemo-european-museum-conference/>

And finally...

Thank you for your contributions.

Sunny spring greetings from your IE News Team.
Marie Banks (UK) – News Coordinator, supported by
Anna Carlemalm (Sweden), Abby McSherry (Ireland),
Elisabeth Nübel-Reidbach (Germany), and Ivana
Zrilić (Croatia).

Any news, projects, thoughts or adventures in interpretation that you want to share?

Send a report and some photos to:
news@interpret-europe.net.

Please consider that we like to promote best practice
examples in the field of heritage interpretation and
follow the guidelines for newsletter authors:

[https://interpret-europe.net/news/guidelines-
for-authors/](https://interpret-europe.net/news/guidelines-for-authors/)

**Deadline for contributions for the summer 2025
edition: Saturday 31 May 2025**

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As a member you can also join our [closed Facebook group](#) or our Facebook country groups for more
regular, informal interpretation chat.

Albania: [Interpret Europe Albania](#)

Bosnia & Herzegovina: [Interpret Europe Bosnia &
Herzegovina](#)

Croatia: [Interpret Europe Croatia](#)

Greece: [Interpret Europe Greece](#)

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

