

Newsletter

Summer 2025



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Dear members,

Years pass by and often we don't even realise that important anniversaries go unnoticed. Well, this will not happen with the 10th anniversary of the editor of IE's Newsletter, Marie Banks! She took on this role in spring 2015 and reflects upon her path in this edition. I therefore take this opportunity and thank her for her unwavering service and excellent job each quarter! This is our space for networking and exchange and its quality depends on us all. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you'd also like to contribute in any way.

The Learning Landscapes initiative, our testing ground for the value-based participatory interpretive planning processes, has another nine months until its completion, yet the call for the new round of learning landscapes is published! The process will start anew in autumn 2026, so you are invited to consider whether you could in the meantime initiate a learning landscape in your region. Find a call and more information further down. To get a better understanding of what this all entails, the LLI team is sharing lessons learned and exchanging with members on any question or concern. You can read their report about thrills and obstacles they meet on the way so far.

Related to the opportunities that the Learning Landscapes initiative shall open to interpreters that are keen on engaging communities in the planning process, mentoring skills seem to be key. Especially our trainers will be more intensely trained in their already strong mentoring role in our courses. We explain below what implications this has for our community of trainers and their upskilling.

The above-mentioned pilot round of the initiative has resulted in a number of planners courses that took place this spring, alongside other training events. Even our youngest in the course family, the Module on Live Interpretation, is taking off with the first training events. You can also read about the destination that decided to offer all three IE certified courses for the local experts that should result in increased quality of interpretation in the region.

The last thing related to training, certified members have again a chance to become IE trainers themselves, so don't miss out the invitation to the CIT course further down these pages.

In line with our policies, it is no surprise that our members report about energising interpretive

projects. Take a peek into a co-creative project of interpretation in a biodiversity garden at one of the student dormitories in Croatia, where bees were acknowledged as heroes of our time, a European project employing interpretation for bringing academic knowledge to the public and an extensive cultural revitalisation efforts from Albania.

Finally, don't miss our invitation to our next conference! This time it will be in the most south western corner of Europe, in Faro, the place of one of the most important documents for all we interpreters do - the famous Faro Convention. Keep an eye out for the Call for papers and join us for an unforgettable gathering in Portugal!

While summer months are usually more quiet, this summer at IE is just as buzzing and lively as other busy months. The volume of this edition is a good proof of that!

Best wishes to all our members, wherever you spend these summer weeks.

Helena Vičič, IE Managing Director

Reflecting on milestones

Marie Banks (UK)

More than half a lifetime in interpretation and ten years of producing your newsletter.

Maybe it's because I'm approaching my 50th year, or because I will soon celebrate ten years of working freelance since I left full-time guaranteed employment, but I have been feeling reflective lately.

I also realised that it is ten years since I agreed to help Thorsten Ludwig, our former IE Managing Director, with the newsletter and am still here as your News Coordinator all this time later. Maybe it is time I let someone else have a go?! Feel free to get in touch if you see yourself being more active in the news/communication role to support IE.

I feel incredibly lucky in my work life, having accidentally fallen into interpretation more than 25 years ago and have worked on a huge variety of subjects and in more countries than I can count. My recent work trips have included a project for a client that I started working for 18 years ago. It is such a pleasure to still support them and it feels like 'coming home' when I visit. There is a Welsh word that has no direct English translation – 'Hiraeth' – which means such a strong sense of belonging that you feel homesick for a place. I feel privileged to have developed strong relationships with other lovely people in the HI field to the extent that I am welcomed to feel at home at their sites. Current and former staff members are definitely in the category of friends rather than just colleagues after all this time. The same trip allowed me to visit three other IE members who are now friends after meeting at IE conferences in the past. Another recent project reignited contact with a friend and former colleague from 21 years ago when we realised our old skills were still the perfect fit for a collaboration.

25 years since the opening of the first visitor attraction I worked for, and with some amazing projects under my belt including everything from a single graphic panel or the tiniest little community-run visitor centre to the largest museum in the world in Kuwait, and a real mixture of content, such as script-writing for David Tennant to voiceover about the Loch Ness Monster, engaging schools with water conservation or offshore wind energy, snippets of the Roman Empire, and lots of wildlife and biodiversity conservation, I like to think that my skills and attitude towards HI implementation have

improved and my perspectives have broadened. I'll certainly look forward to continuing to develop and work with more heritage sites and communities over the coming years.

My conclusion ...working in HI is good for the soul if not always the bank balance!

Looking back on the anniversary of supporting IE, in those ten years the stories we have shared on the pages of these newsletters are just as diverse and rich. It is an absolute pleasure to hear from and work with so many of you, members and non-members, to spread your news and experiences to the wider membership and beyond. It has been an enriching experience for me to support and collaborate with authors from more than 55 countries. Where will the next ten years take us? Don't forget to get in touch if you'd like to join the team!

Marie Banks is a freelance interpretation specialist, copywriter and editor, trading under www.zebraproof.uk. Prior to this, she spent more than 15 years in the museums sector as an Exhibition Manager and then as an international consultant. Marie is IE's News Coordinator and can be contacted at: marie.banks@interpret-europe.net.



'The Quest Continues' gallery wall treatment at The Loch Ness Centre, Scotland, UK (Image: Lloyd Hicks)

From ambition to action

Vanessa Vaio (Italy)

What we're learning through the Learning Landscapes Initiative.

The Learning Landscapes Initiative (LLI) is powered by interpretive agents working in their regions, to turn heritage into a drive for change. Reaching the middle of its pilot phase, a Q&A session gave IE members the opportunity to learn more about it. This is what we shared.

A year ago, after months of preparatory work, Interpret Europe, in cooperation with UNESCO, launched the Learning Landscapes Initiative (LLI). We knew we were stepping into ambitious and somewhat uncharted territory. Bringing together diverse actors across Europe to explore how heritage interpretation can become a driver for local development, community cohesion, and participatory governance was never going to be simple. And it isn't. But it's starting to work.

Along the way we discover or confirm the consequences, the outcomes and the challenges resulting from when co-creation, people-centred and value-based heritage interpretation are put into practice. At the same time, we try to communicate our intentions, involve our community, and stay open to feedback.

This is why, being halfway through the pilot phase, we – the LLI team and the areas' interpretive agents – held an online Q&A meeting, open to all IE members. These are some of these insights we discussed.

Clarity is a journey, not a given

One of the clearest messages we've heard from IE members is that the structure and goals of LLI still feel a bit unclear — even for those who are following our updates with interest.

We understand. The initiative is large, multi-layered, and still in development. But that doesn't mean we can't do better in explaining it. As Valya Stergioti, LLI team member and mentor of the Zagori LL, pointed out, "If, even after detailed presentations, people feel things are still unclear, we need to hear that feedback and try to improve."

So, we're taking this seriously. In addition to written updates, we're working on visual tools like infographics that can map out the goals, structure,

and timeline of the initiative in a more accessible way.

'How do I benefit as an IE member?'

Another important question we heard was: "Does this apply to me as an IE member?"

The answer is yes—even if not directly or immediately. While the six pilot regions are the current focus, we fully intend to open the door to other members, who may want to:

- adopt co-creative methods in their local settings,
- draw inspiration from the models and results we're developing,
- run their own Learning Landscape in the future.

We plan to provide an international online symposium, operational guidelines, and a presentation at the next IE conference, so that the whole IE community can benefit from the process and outcomes of the LLI pilot phase.

Participation isn't one-size-fits-all

One of the most compelling challenges we've encountered was how to meaningfully engage stakeholders — especially beyond the 'usual suspects'. Each site brought its own dynamics. At some, local administrations or thematic experts took the lead. Elsewhere, ordinary citizens played a central role. For example, at Wadden Sea, our interpretive agents reminded us that there's no universal formula: recruitment strategies must reflect local realities, and success can look very different from one place to another. Sometimes, just getting people to sit at the same table is already a major step forward.

Another recurring challenge was managing expectations. Communities often long for quick, visible results. Yet we've learned that even small wins — new collaborations, unexpected dialogue, more open conversations — are deeply meaningful. 'Quick' doesn't have to mean superficial, and not all progress is immediately visible.

It's also important to acknowledge that people come with different positions, priorities, and sometimes conflicting views. Our work isn't about erasing those differences, but about creating safe, constructive spaces where they can be expressed and explored. This has been central in IE since the launch of the initiative, 'Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage' in 2017.

At Wadden Sea, for instance, the inclusion of fishermen brought these tensions to light — and revealed just how important it is to navigate them thoughtfully. Roşia Montană offered another powerful example as a place where deep-seated perspectives coexist, and where dialogue itself can be both a challenge and a result.

Why LLI matters to everyone

Thorsten Ludwig, head of the LLI team and Wadden Sea mentor, said, “Heritage is the medium” — a way to connect people, foster reflection, and build open, democratic societies in times that are increasingly fragile.

This idea is weaved throughout the LLI. Because, ultimately, LLI is a test of IE’s new paradigm and as such, it matters to the broader interpretive community.

It helps us, IE interpreters, to refine our approach, verify our assumptions, and strengthen our claim that interpretation is not a luxury — it’s essential.

Looking ahead

We, the LLI team, are still learning. If we were to repeat this experience, there are things we’d do differently — and that’s a good sign, as said, “It means we’re growing”.

In the coming months, we’ll share more about what has worked well, what proved most challenging, and what lies ahead. And we’ll do our best to make it easy for everyone to follow along and take part.

If this resonates with you, we’d love to hear from you. Your questions, reflections and curiosity are helping shape this initiative — and that’s exactly the point.

The LLI team consists of: Thorsten Ludwig, Valya Stergioti, Lucija Gudlin, Vanessa Vaio.



An interpretive strategy is like a puzzle of stories and narratives (Image: De Backere)

European projects update – Where are we now?

Alexander Colvine (France)

HI-People and Empaths have been progressing since the start of the year – Here's an update on what has been happening.

HI-People is a 4-year project funded by the EU Creative Europe programme designed to capitalise on IE's efforts over the last ten years to promote and develop value-based heritage interpretation and cement IE's position as an international reference, or hub, in the matter.

This focuses on fostering a common understanding, or Framework of Reference, among European heritage stakeholders of people-centred and value-based heritage interpretation. This refers to what exactly is meant when we use the term, its component parts, common principles and ethical guidelines to use it consistently in different situations.

Over the next four years, a small team led by IE's Cultural Heritage Coordinator, Patrick Lehnés, will prepare and run a consultation process to identify those essentials mentioned above, starting with a research and scoping core group of expert advisors from the European heritage sector then to a wider, inclusive consultation, ultimately including all IE members. The Framework of Reference will be a platform for exchange with the potential to evolve further instead of ceasing at a fixed standard. The work begins now, so look out for further updates on the HI-People projects page from this autumn onwards.

HI-People is also designed to grow the IE network, build the capacity of interpreters, promote their role and the contribution of heritage to critical challenges in European society. Training, a keystone of IE's offer and identity, consequently features highly. In June, we held our first trainers' summer school in Vrsar, Croatia, as part of the project, where participants took part in modules and module upgrades, capacity building and trainer workshops. Such occasions to meet in person over several days are invaluable to inject new energy, ideas and a sense of community. The post-event evaluation is underway and we will act on the findings to further improve and shape an annual programme of summer schools that best responds to real needs.

The Learning Landscapes initiative also features in HI-People, notably as it is a very important test-bed to train heritage professionals from outside IE in

value-based heritage interpretation principles and practice. The plan is that HI-People will help support a second cycle of territories to co-create interpretive strategies and deliver IE courses, with additional opportunities for our expanding community of trainers.

A further exciting development is a new Certified Interpretive Trainer course to be held in Frankfurt, Germany, on 2-6 February 2026, when we look forward to welcoming a new generation of IE trainers! Linked to this, work is starting with an experienced Italian cultural consultancy firm, Melting Pro, to provide a mentoring and peer support programme for interpretive trainers and freelancers.

HI-People is also about networking, advocacy and visibility. To that end, our community of country coordinators will hold a series of regional/national networking events to promote heritage interpretation and IE to professionals from heritage, tourism and more as a common thread to connect different sectors and disciplines. We plan to hold the first events towards the end of the year. The idea is that coordinators can mobilise growing numbers of national members to present, demonstrate and promote the merits of HI and generate collaborative opportunities in their countries.

IE will finally have a formal communication and dissemination strategy by the end of the summer. Recent online consultations and workshops have also been held to identify annual themes for membership campaigns as well as materials for trainers and coordinators to promote IE and deliver their activities. Improved consistency and quality in our communication, from podcasts to video pills, GAHI webinars and world cafés, coupled with a redesigned website with greater opportunities for exchange among members, is vital to IE's next stage in its growth and development which the HI-People will help us achieve over the next four years.

Our second project, Empaths, is a 30-month European Erasmus+ transnational cooperation project with Greek, Italian and Austrian partners. It began in October 2024 to research, design, test and promote a training programme on participatory heritage interpretation. The aim is that it can be used by heritage professionals to better run co-creation processes involving local communities, reflecting the democratisation of heritage and the shift to value-based heritage interpretation.

The research phase to gather details and experiences of participatory practices in the heritage and heritage-related sectors is now complete and the results will gradually be published on the project

platform: <https://empaths-project.eu>.

Many thanks to those of you who responded to questionnaires and took part in online consultation meetings. Your contributions are invaluable.

Work to draft the training programme guidelines and content has now begun, starting with interviews with our piloting partners and other local heritage stakeholders to identify needs and local contexts when running the pilot training in autumn 2026. This was all the more important as the interviewees are also potential training participants.

We are also producing a skills manifesto, a document designed to promote the subject, the course and benefits to future participants.

The remaining tasks include the creation of the training programme curriculum and syllabus with online and onsite training materials (by September 2025), an independent evaluation (by EVTA) and uploading the learning materials to the Empaths website. Special thanks must go to our IE friends, Claudia Grünberg and Sebastian Zoepf, for their expertise and experience to help us produce the training course and training guidelines.

Empaths is smaller and shorter in comparison to HI-People but will expand our knowledge and experience in participatory value-based heritage interpretation in other territorial settings alongside the ongoing Learning Landscapes Initiative involving a selection of UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Look out for more news on both HI-People and Empaths on the IE website and social media!

Alexander (Sandy) Colvine is IE's Project Manager for both European projects. He can be contacted at: alexander.colvine@interpret-europe.net.



Training summer school (Image: Helena Vičič)

Mentoring becomes part of our trainer training

Thorsten Ludwig (Germany)

As the IE training programme expands to entire regions and the relevance of co-creation increases, the role of trainers as mentors is growing.

A mentor is an experienced advisor fostering personal and professional growth of a mentee. The term originates from Greek mythology: Mentor was the name of a friend of Odysseus. When Odysseus was abroad for 20 years, in the Trojan War and on the Odyssey, Mentor advised his son Telemachus.

Mentoring of IE course participants doesn't last as long as that, but IE trainers need to be good mentors for two reasons:

- IE seeks to encourage and enable people to interpret more on their own in order to grow people's mindfulness through heritage. Consequently, IE trainers when acting as mentors should encourage and enable interpreters to facilitate this process.
- IE recently extended its training portfolio from teaching about interpretive services and plans to supporting the co-creation of interpretive strategies for entire regions. IE trainers as mentors play a critical role in this.

The key output of IE's certification courses are homework assignments in which participants transfer the newly acquired knowledge and skills to their own areas. But besides this output the process plays an increasingly important role.

On the one hand, it includes the experiences participants can take away for their personal growth. On the other hand, it grows the participants' competences for their career development, not only regarding exchange with guests (e.g. in encouraging and facilitating dialogue in interpretive walks) but also with local stakeholders (e.g. in negotiating narratives when co-creating interpretive plans).

So far, the time available for the IE Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT) course was too short to pay tribute to this increased demand. But since the course has now grown into a full 40-hour course, we can also include mentoring as a session.

We don't start from scratch. A critical prerequisite is that, although IE trainers usually don't have a permanent working relationship with their

participants (e.g. they are not their superiors), due to the exclusively face-to-face courses, they first experience their mentees personally. This extends over five days in formal and casual settings, alone and in collaboration with others, in successes and failures, under time pressure and in exam situations.

Our trainers also teach peer reviewing throughout all our courses. From the very beginning, participants are encouraged to provide feedback and to critically examine their work results together without flattery. This is only possible when the exchange is based on trust, fairness, and goodwill; qualities we systematically foster through our methodology. After introducing the IE Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) course, we also started to run post-course online meetings to discuss the state of the individual homework assignments, looking for a balance between individual mentoring and group mentoring.

So, what needs to go into the CIT course that is not already good practice? At our recent summer school we collected hints from our trainers on what knowledge and skills are needed, what values we should foster and what practical points and potential pitfalls need to be taken into account. Based on the topics our trainers brought together, we are now discussing what we need to research further, what should go into a dedicated session on mentoring, and how we can more organically integrate the subject in the trainer course, from where it will hopefully trickle down into all IE training events and beyond.

We now have six months to develop this. The new elements will then be introduced to our trainer candidates in the CIT course in February and shared with our active trainers at the next summer school.

Thorsten Ludwig (MSc Interpretation) first studied archaeology and worked in a national park until 1993, when he founded Bildungswerk interpretation. Together with Valya Stergioti, he has been training all IE trainers since 2016. Within the IE Training Team, he took responsibility for the CIT course. Thorsten can be contacted at: info@bildungswerk.de.



CIP training course (Image: Thorsten Ludwig)

Shaping stories of nature and heritage

Nadija Kolmanič (Slovenia)

Three interpretation workshops in Kočevsko trained locals to share the region's rich natural and cultural heritage in deeper, more engaging ways.

Nestled in the heart of Slovenia, Kočevsko is a region defined by vast forests, rich biodiversity, and cultural depth. With over 90% of its landscape covered in forest, it stands as one of the most pristine, secluded, and ecologically important areas in the country. Beyond its natural wonders, Kočevsko holds a long history of traditions, and stories waiting to be discovered. This unique blend of wilderness and heritage offers a powerful foundation for storytelling—especially when paired with thoughtful interpretation that brings meaning, context, and emotional connection to the surface.

In early 2025, Kočevsko hosted a series of heritage interpretation workshops, bringing together local professionals to explore new ways of presenting the region's heritage. Supported by the HealthyForestRegions project (Interreg Central Europe) and led by Interpret Europe certified trainers, the programme focused on guiding, writing, and planning.

The **Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP)** course launched the series in January. It introduced structured methods for analysing heritage sites, identifying the potential for meaningful connections, and designing inclusive, sustainable visitor experiences. Emphasising long-term thinking and stakeholder involvement, the course set a strong foundation.

Participant Nevenka Klun reflected: *"I recently attended the planner training, and it was both engaging and educational. The seminar offered deep insights into planning for cultural and natural heritage. Balancing the needs of visitors, stakeholders, and heritage itself can be challenging—but when done right, it benefits everyone. Since Kočevsko is so forested, we must present this natural heritage in a way that informs and captivates, turning the experience into something truly memorable."*

Next came the **Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW)** course. This module focused on turning factual content into emotionally engaging narratives. Through exercises, peer feedback, and thematic reflection, participants learned to tailor texts that can reach diverse audiences.



The secret forest of Slovenia (Image: Kapele)

For some, it was a chance to build on earlier experience. As Dr. Petra Draškovič Pelc noted: *"I was glad to build on my previous writer and planner training. This approach offers a clear structure for reaching guests more deeply—inviting them to reflect and adding that 'something extra'. The trainers turned complex ideas into something both practical and inspiring."*

The final workshop was the **Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG)** course. Held outdoors over five days, it brought interpretation theory into practice. Participants delivered interpretive talks, used sensory engagement, and learned how to prompt reflection—even in unpredictable weather.

Janez Konečnik, an experienced local guide, said: *"When I was first invited, I thought—why do I need this? I already know how to guide. But the training changed my perspective. Even with decades of experience, I left with fresh insights and a better understanding of how differently people perceive the same thing."*

Offered free of charge, the workshops not only improved individual skills but also strengthened community bonds. Participants described the experience as transformative—both personally and professionally.

Together, these trainings helped form a new network of interpreters—ready to tell Kočevsko's stories in ways that speak to both heart and mind.

Nadija Kolmanič is a cultural anthropologist and public relations advisor at the Institute for Tourism and Culture Kočevje, Slovenia (www.kocevsko.com). She works on developing content and strategies for local tourism promotion and manages communication across various platforms. You can reach her at nadija.kolmanic@kocevsko.com.

Kostoula: Beyond the Zagori cultural landscape view

Olga Kostoula (Greece)

Learning to see beyond the view and unravel the potential advantages of a well-structured interpretation plan of Zagori cultural landscape.

In March 2025 an Interpret Europe course took place in the city of Ioannina, in the region of Epirus, northwestern Greece. It was part of IE's Learning Landscape initiative (LLI) which, in Greece, is implemented through the project 'Learning Aspects of the Zagori Cultural Landscape', under the coordination of the Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (MedINA). The Zagori region has a cultural landscape which offers a multi-layered learning experience due to its traditional architecture, cultural history and natural ecosystems.

The workshop combined a theoretical and practical part which took place in Its Kale, an inner fortress of the old town of Ioannina city.

The course brought together an extraordinary mosaic of participants of different occupations and education, such as biologists, mountain summits, architects-conservators of art, nature pedagogues, cultural heritage consultants, librarians, hoteliers, geographers, physical education teachers, ecotuners, cultural ecologists, environmental education specialists, theatre educators-outdoor pedagogues, historians- archaeologists, National Parks curators and tour guides. Under the excellent guidance of the trainer, these people created original interpretation plans and presented them in front of an audience with whom the participants had a fertile discussion. The workshop was completed with a visit to Tristeno village of Zagori, where the group discussed with villagers about the difficulties to highlight the local heritage due to the local depopulation.

Over six inspiring days, we had the opportunity to connect with others and exchange approaches and strategies on authenticity, sustainability and collaboration. Also, we had the experience of using modern methodologies to sense the spirit of a place, decode difficult or controversial meanings of intangible heritage and especially how to cope with different opinions or emotions of people.

It is well known that connecting the present with the future comes with hidden challenges and responsibilities. This connection often demands dynamic decisions on a personal and a local level. A landscape isn't just a backdrop to people's lives.



On the stone bridge of Tristeno village (Image: Ioannidis)

It influences us and guides how we perceive history and how we create an authentic identity. Also, it relates nature to people. This dynamic workshop gave us practical tools to confront these challenges and find applicable solutions.

Personally, I had an inspiring and exciting journey. I experienced how to "see beyond the view", and find out emotions, memories, or even hidden conflicts, that a landscape always carries. I have to say, the diversity of participants was a pleasant surprise for me, due to the interesting and unexpected dialogues it created within the group. Finally, this workshop helped me a lot to think 'out of the box' and dare to follow my visions on interpreting cultural heritage.

Olga Kostoula is a biologist from Greece, specialised in diagnostic mycology with teaching and research experience on environmentally friendly bioapplications. In her free time, she loves to read and write books about natural and cultural heritage. You can contact her at: olkostul@hotmail.com.



Preparing a traditional meal in Tristeno village (Image: Ioannidis)

Interpretive writing in Greece: it's a girl's job!

Vicky Antoniou (Greece)

A diverse group of women dive into interpretive writing, exploring heritage, creativity, and storytelling in the heart of Athens.

In March, an IE Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW) course was held in Athens, Greece. The weather was so sunny and warm, that we joked it was better suited for the summer newsletter, though perhaps it wasn't just a joke!

Participants came from different parts of the country and we had the joy to welcome an international participant who travelled all the way from the Azores! Interestingly, the entire group was made up of women—a rare and energizing coincidence. Despite that common thread, our professional backgrounds varied widely and while some had attended other IE courses before, for others it was their first introduction to interpretive training.

The place that hosted us for those five days was in the very beating centre of the bustling capital, but since it was early for the heavy touristic season, we had the privilege of enjoying the interesting variety of the phenomena surrounding us without the crowds. The area, known for having the oldest street in Europe, offered the perfect setting for exploring the layers of human history and cultural phenomena.

The course started with us, presenting ourselves through an object that we brought with us. This was very helpful both as a means of self-presentation and as an introduction to one of the main purposes of this course, to initiate the crafting of a story. Throughout the week we discussed a lot about universal values, themes and topics about phenomena. We also engaged in a lot of exercises that required our inspiration and creativity for the delivery of stories.

One highlight was the visit to the Maria Callas Museum, where we examined the exhibition from an interpretive perspective and later designed audio guides based on selected themes. This hands-on task really brought the theoretical aspects to life. While our days were mainly dedicated to team exercises, each day also included time for working on our final personal projects, that was creating an interpretive panel on a phenomenon of our choice.

This task allowed us to apply all the new tools and knowledge in real time. On the final day, we presented our panels, peer-reviewed each other's

work, and offered constructive feedback. It was a moving and inspiring conclusion to a week full of learning and connection.

We closed the course with a shared dinner, reflecting on everything we had experienced. As we all agreed, in the end it wasn't just about learning to write interpretively, but also about discovering our voice as storytellers of heritage.

Vicky is a museologist working at OikoM Ltd. She explores the world of heritage interpretation with a special interest in difficult heritage.



Interpretive writing in action! (Image: Laura Tapini)



Group brainstorming (Image: Valya Stergioti)

Heritage came alive

Irina Ban (Croatia)

A module on live interpretation was held in the Trakošćan Castle, Croatia.

For the first time in Croatia, the two-day IE module on live interpretation was held. It took place at the Trakošćan Castle, a protected cultural property of national importance. The historical and natural entity consisting of the castle, surrounding buildings, a park-forest and a lake, turned out to be the perfect location for the module. The inspiring surroundings provided participants with the opportunity to develop the in-depth specific skills needed for live heritage interpretation.

The aim of the module was to enable the distinction between costuming and interpretation itself, with an emphasis on character building and their interaction in a real heritage setting. The module covered theoretical and practical aspects of interpretation, with a particular focus on audience engagement and the creation of authentic experiences.

Irina Ban is IE's Country Coordinator Croatia. She can be contacted at: irina.ban@interpret-europe.net.



**Bringing heritage stories to life in the castle
(Image: Trakošćan Castle)**

Become a Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT)

IE Training Team

Apply now for CIT 2026 in Frankfurt and join the IE team of trainers.

The next Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT) course will take place in Frankfurt, Germany, from 2-6 February 2026. The CIT course will be led by Thorsten Ludwig and Valya Stergioti, who together train all IE trainers.

Could you become an IE Certified Interpretive Trainer?

To be eligible, participants must:

- hold an IE certification (any course) by the start of the CIT course,
- have experience in adult education, and
- be active in a relevant field (e.g. guiding, writing, planning).

But being an IE trainer is more than meeting criteria. It means joining a strong community of over 30 trainers who deliver courses across Europe, contribute to the development of IE's training programme, and act as ambassadors of heritage interpretation. It is a role that offers professional growth, responsibility, and collaboration.

Course format and content

The CIT course combines five on-site days with four online preparatory sessions in the months leading up to the event. These online sessions will cover IE's core interpretive qualities (heritage, participation, meanings and values, stewardship) and guide participants in preparing their papers and training sessions. These assignments form the basis of their engagement during the on-site course and are part of the final assessment.

Following the CIT course, participants may attend optional three-day trainer upgrades to qualify for delivering IE's certification courses (e.g. CIG, CIW, CIP). Dates and locations for these upgrades will be announced separately, depending on interest.

Our venue: Frankfurt, Germany

The course will take place at the Jugendherberge Frankfurt – Haus der Jugend, a centrally located youth hostel overlooking the Main River. All participants will be accommodated in twin rooms with private bathrooms, and full board will be provided.

Curated study visits to local institutions will connect directly to the course content. These visits will explore core CIT themes, including:

- the four interpretive qualities,
- sustainability,
- conflict and dialogue,
- co-creation and local engagement.

Important dates

- Info webinar: 2 September 2025, 15:00–16:00 CET (The session will be recorded – if you cannot attend live, you can request the link afterwards)
- Application deadline: 9 September 2025
- First round of selected participants announced: 30 September 2025

How to apply

To apply, please:

- submit a motivational letter explaining your interest in becoming a trainer,
- provide proof of relevant experience,
- share a selected part of your IE certification homework, translated into English,
- complete the pre-course questionnaire

All documents must be submitted in a single email by 9 September 2025 and further information will be posted on the IE website.

For application and content-related questions, please contact Valya Stergioti – valya.stergioti@interpret-europe.net

For logistics and practical arrangements, please contact Andrijana Milisavljević – andrijana.milisavljevic@interpret-europe.net



An exercise from a previous CIT course in Krakow
(Image: Thorsten Ludwig)

Congratulations to our newly certified members

Certified Interpretive Guides (CIG)

Mia Adamović, Albania
Irina Ban, Croatia
Danuta Banaszak, Poland
Marija Aleksandra Bel Dajković, Croatia
Ivana Blagušević, Croatia
Viktorija Briševac, Croatia
Dunja Brnić, Croatia
Nikica Bušljeta, Croatia
Gianni Bužleta, Croatia
Cristina Caterev, Moldova
Natalia Covali, Moldova
Lina Cvitković, Croatia
Jurand Czajko, Poland
Marija Dejanović, Croatia
Simona Dobravac, Croatia
Renata Dossi, Croatia
Ivona Eck, Croatia
Ana Eremia, Moldova
Norma Fressel, Croatia
Grzegorz Gorycki, Poland
Jordan Grgurač, Croatia
Danijela Grubišić, Croatia
Ana Josipović, Croatia
Antonija Jurković, Croatia
Tijana Keljalić, Croatia
Marija Kragić, Croatia
Kristina Krapić, Croatia
Klaudija Leverić, Croatia
Sandra Lorenzin, Croatia
Milena Loucki, Croatia
Marijan Lukić, Croatia
Janine Machado, Portugal
Susie Mattocks, United Kingdom
Mihovil Mijolović, Croatia
Mirela Miletić, Croatia
Mihovila Milin, Croatia

Certified Interpretive Guides (CIG) (continued)

Marijana Milovac, Croatia
Alen Nekić, Croatia
Iva Parić, Croatia
Marija Petry, Croatia
Ewa Pociężyńska, Poland
Tea Radošević, Croatia
Izabela Raunik Keglević, Croatia
Sonja Sacco, Croatia
Nerina Sarkotić, Croatia
Ida Skoko, Croatia
Nina Skoko, Croatia
Josip Smernić, Croatia
Martina Špralja, Croatia
Ivana Steeman, Belgium
Karmen Štifanić, Croatia
Irene Šugar, Croatia
Lucijan Vesely, Croatia
Nikolina Vuković, Croatia
Katarzyna Wajda-Pudełko, Poland

Certified Interpretive Writers (CIW)

Stephanie Bris, France
Anita Crnčić, Croatia
Piotr Cypriański, Poland
Franka Gržin, Croatia
Katarina Juras, Croatia
Antonija Jurković, Croatia
Mihovila Milin, Croatia
Ivona Miloš, Croatia
Iva Parić, Croatia

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
29/09-03/10/2025	English	Lauwersoog, Netherlands	Vanessa Vaio
10-14/11/2025	English	Lauwersoog, Netherlands	Vanessa Vaio
15-16/11/25 (part 2)	German	Lubmin, Germany	Thorsten Ludwig
Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW)			
29/09-03/10/2025	English	Lauwersoog, Netherlands	Valya Stergioti
10-14/11/2025	English	Lauwersoog, Netherlands	Valya Stergioti
08-12/12/2025	English	Bastogne, Belgium	Thorsten Ludwig
Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP)			
None planned	Keep an eye on the website		
Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT)			
02-06/02/2026	English	Frankfurt, Germany	Thorsten Ludwig & Valya Stergioti

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.

Every story has its hero

Iva Silla (Croatia)

Life in a student dormitory blooms with the help of an interpretive hum.

How can heritage interpretation enrich teenagers' living space? This article brings one possible answer to that question through a case study of an unusual application of IE methodology.

Every story has its hero, a character we meet, follow, and cheer for... Our future, shaken by climate change, also needs a hero who will save us from the threatening uncertainty, just like in a movie. Whether it will be bees, forests, or someone else, no one knew at the beginning of this creative journey.

In recent years, the Maksimir Student Dormitory in the Croatian capital of Zagreb has been nurturing a biodiversity garden as a contribution to the fight against the consequences of climate change by transforming it into a green urban oasis. The next step was obvious: to turn it into an interpretive garden. So, the search for the hero began. A group of students and educators from Maksimir Dormitory started a project, Heroes for a (sustainable) future, the main goal of which was to raise awareness of the importance of preserving biodiversity by using heritage interpretation tools to connect the phenomena from the garden with the students' personal experience.

Some learning was needed first. Before even framing the idea of the garden and its theme, it was necessary to familiarise oneself with the interpretation of heritage, especially natural heritage, to visit examples of natural heritage interpretation, as well as environments that coexist with urban fauna, and to learn from those involved in environmental protection so that real-life examples would encourage students to emotionally interact with the information.

First, the group of hero seekers visited The Bee Path in the City of Ljubljana to experience the city that cares about bees and biodiversity, then the Faculty of Geotechnical Engineering to learn more about 'Bees - Guardians of Life on Earth', as well as the visitor centre 'Med dvema vodama' to explore examples of natural heritage interpretation.

The dormitory hosted several co-creative workshops for students led by IE trainers. The students selected several phenomena in their charming garden, explored the concept of interpretive themes, and crafted interpretive panels. Their hero is a bee, a dear guest to their garden. They emphasised the meaning of bees through an interesting narrative of each phenomenon, at the same time connecting their tales to the cycle of a school year and children's lives in the dormitory.

The result was an interpretive garden, Gradska pčela i djeca sa sela (The City Bee Meets the Country Kids), a permanent outdoor classroom and a pleasant place that is not only for learning but also for reflecting on one's own role in preserving a healthy environment.



Non-personal interpretation makes the garden experience more personal (Image: Nađ, Branko)

How did heritage interpretation reach a student dormitory in the first place? The answer, of course, lies in the ever-inspired Interpret Europe members. It all started years ago. The dormitory educators have been organising interpretive tours as a welcoming activity for the children who came to live in their new hometown of Zagreb. In the meantime, their tour guides have become active Interpret Europe trainers.

The collaboration has expanded with creative workshops and projects that introduced students to interpretive skills. Last year, Katarina Fruk, one of the educators, became an IE certified interpretive guide. Soon after, she put her new skills to the test in a real setting: she organised a free interpretive tour for Zagreb residents. The only problem was, 100 people showed up, which is usually not the best recipe for an intimate interpretive exchange. But she skilfully pulled it off, leaving the experience with even more ideas of how to apply our methodology.

Fast forward to May 20th, World Bee Day, a perfect day for the official presentation of the project. Everything was in tune with the interpretive theme and topic. The organisers remembered to include all the senses by serving linden tea and honey treats. Is there a better way to open an interpretive project, but with an interpretive walk? Several students prepared thought-provoking interpretive speeches and shared their enthusiasm for their garden. While you're reading this, they might be in their garden, reading the interpretive panels by a linden tree, listening to the gentle hum of the bees.

"I will always remember this year's World Bee Day as it filled me with pride and happiness. We started working with kids from the dormitory in 2021, and each year we had a different project. From a small digital map to the exhibition Home, sweet home, the interpretive garden was the most ambitious and complete project in terms of heritage interpretation. I enjoyed working with teenagers; it was a challenge, but the results are fantastic", Iva Čaleta Pleša reflects on her involvement in this humming project.

Katarina Fruk works as an educator in a student dormitory. Contact her at katarina.fruk@gmail.com.

Iva Silla works as an interpretive guide, writer and trainer. Contact her at iva@questoftales.com.

Iva Čaleta Pleša works as a tourism expert, interpretive guide, and trainer. Contact her at ivacaleta@gmail.com.



Interpretive talk for a perfect project presentation & the project team enjoying the flowery version of the game Ludo (Images: Nađ, Branko)



Bringing ancient inscriptions to life: The Prometheus Project

Vasilka Dimitrovska (North Macedonia)

When the academic community embraces interpretation—bridging the gap between ancient science and everyday visitors.

In the last decade, heritage interpretation has gained visibility as a method that not only conveys facts but invites connection, collaboration, and co-creation. But what happens when academic disciplines—traditionally focused on research—begin to adopt interpretive thinking? The Prometheus Project offers an inspiring answer.

Funded by the Creative Europe Programme, PROMETHEUS – Promoting Universal Values through Digital Epigraphy and Cultural Heritage – brings together five leading institutions from North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Serbia. The project is coordinated by the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia, in partnership with the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade, the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, and Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje—all prominent academic and research institutions across the region.

Their shared goal is to digitise and reinterpret ancient inscriptions from across the region, building an open-access epigraphic corpus. Yet beyond the technology, something more transformative is unfolding—a shift within the academic world toward meaningful public engagement.

This change is most visible in how the project moves beyond mere digitisation. Prometheus doesn't just catalogue inscriptions; it reimagines them as stories worth telling. Drawing on interdisciplinary input from scholars, archaeologists, and—critically—heritage interpreters, the project breathes new life into stone-carved words that have long remained silent to most museum and site visitors.

Through workshops, public talks, and experimental formats, epigraphy has been brought into dialogue with contemporary audiences. As a heritage interpreter, I had the opportunity to contribute by designing a tailor-made gamified experience in Skopje for participants of the second Prometheus workshop. The feedback from scholars was deeply encouraging: curiosity was sparked, minds opened, and the wall between scientific knowledge and emotional engagement began to dissolve.

This is where Prometheus becomes a symbol of something greater. For years, the gap between academic heritage research and public understanding has felt insurmountable. Now, with interpretation as a bridge, we are beginning to see what it looks like when academic institutions step outside the ivory tower—embracing storytelling, digital tools, and inclusive methodologies to connect with people where they are.

At its heart, Prometheus is not just about preserving the past—it's about giving it a voice. A voice that speaks not only to scholars, but also to schoolchildren, tourists, gamers, and curious wanderers in museum corridors and at archaeological sites. It is a testament to the idea that ancient science can still stir emotion, spark imagination, and carry meaning into the present.

Vasilka Dimitrovska is the IE Country Coordinator North Macedonia and is an IE certified interpretive trainer. She is the director of HAEMUS – the Center for Scientific Research and Promotion of Culture (www.haemus.org.mk), and the owner of Storytelling Skopje (www.storytelling-skopje.com) and Storytelling Macedonia (<http://www.storytelling-macedonia.com/>). She can be contacted at: dimitrovska@haemus.org.mk.



Prometheus Project
(Images: Filip Markovski & Ralitsa Ivanova)

Revitalizing Durres' heritage

Inesa Sulaj (Albania)

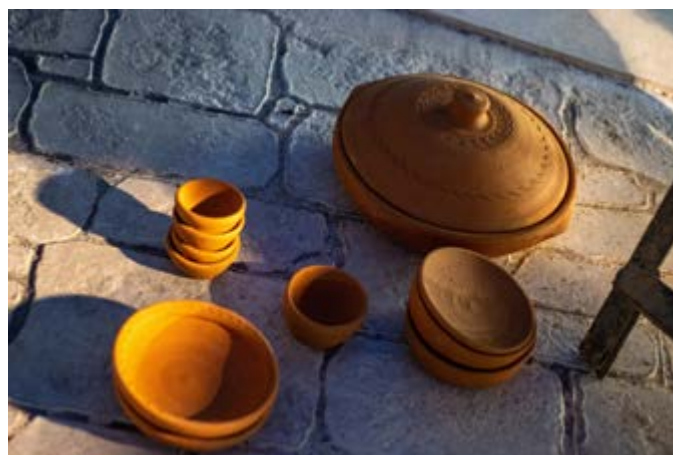
A year-long journey of awareness, education, and community engagement in Albania.

Durres, one of Albania's most ancient and historically rich cities, is undergoing a remarkable cultural revival thanks to a year-long collaboration between Durresi Aktiv and MuZEH Lab, supported by the EU4Culture initiative. This comprehensive project is dedicated to raising awareness, fostering education, and promoting sustainable cultural tourism at some of the city's most emblematic heritage sites, including the Venetian Tower and the historic Hamam. The initiative seeks to deepen both local and visitor engagement with Durres' rich history, ensuring that its cultural treasures are not only preserved but also celebrated and passed on to future generations.

A key part of the project has been the organisation of vibrant cultural events held at key heritage sites. One standout occasion was the Cultural Night at Hammam of Durrës, an Ottoman era bathhouse transformed into a lively cultural venue. This event combined classical music performances, visual projections of historical artifacts, and artisan exhibitions, to create a multisensory experience that illuminated the history and significance of the site. Such events serve as dynamic platforms for heritage interpretation by engaging audiences emotionally and intellectually, helping them to see historical places not just as relics of the past but as living spaces filled with stories and creative energy. By showcasing local artists and cultural practitioners, these events also foster community involvement and contribute to the sustainable use of heritage spaces.

The project also emphasises professional development and capacity building through specialised training sessions held at MuZEH Lab. These workshops equip museum professionals, educators, and cultural workers with advanced skills in heritage interpretation and storytelling, enabling them to communicate Durres' history in ways that resonate with diverse audiences. Special attention is given to promoting social inclusion by actively involving women, youth, minorities, and disadvantaged people in both training and cultural activities. This inclusive approach not only enriches the cultural dialogue but also ensures that the benefits of heritage preservation are shared widely across the community.

Importantly, this project builds on the success of the previous EU4Culture funded Old Doors Trail initiative (<https://theolddoorstrail.com/>), aiming to extend



Traditional heritage of Durres (Images: Inesa Sulaj)



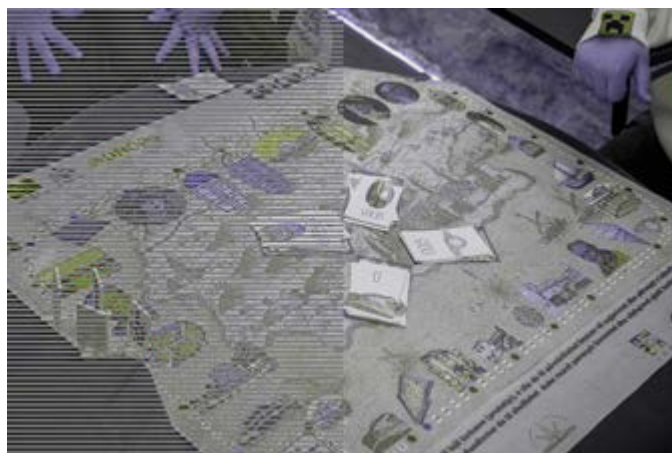
and deepen socio-economic opportunities by linking cultural heritage with sustainable tourism and local employment. By fostering collaboration between civil society organisations, cultural operators, and public institutions, the project creates synergies that strengthen the cultural sector and promote environmentally responsible tourism. The use of eco-friendly materials and sustainable artistic production throughout the project reflects a strong commitment to minimising environmental impact, demonstrating that heritage conservation and sustainability can go hand-in-hand.

The immediate impact of these combined efforts is evident in the heightened awareness and appreciation of Durres' cultural heritage among both locals and tourists. Through engaging performances and educational workshops, participants gain a deeper understanding of the historical significance of sites like the Venetian Tower and the Hamam, while also developing skills related to heritage preservation and sustainable tourism. Over the longer term, the project aspires to foster sustained socio-economic growth by leveraging cultural heritage as a driver for tourism, employment, and community empowerment. The creation of lasting partnerships among cultural practitioners, public institutions, and local communities is a key part of this vision, ensuring that Durres' heritage is protected and promoted for generations to come.

This approach, combining education, cultural programming, professional training, and community engagement, offers a valuable model for heritage interpreters and cultural professionals. It highlights the power of collaborative efforts to make history accessible, relevant, and inspiring, demonstrating that cultural heritage is not just about preserving the past but about enriching the present and shaping the future.

Following the rich cultural activities and professional development efforts, the project has also created an innovative educational tool aimed at younger generations: the Discover Durrës board game. This interactive game is designed for children aged 7 to 12, inviting them to explore Durrës' heritage in a playful yet meaningful way. Players take on roles such as Traveler, Archaeologist, Artist, or Artisan, each linked to various landmarks, artists, and craftsmen important in the city's history. Moving through a large game board representing Durrës, children encounter illustrated cards that tell fascinating stories about each site or figure, combining visual engagement with storytelling to help children absorb historical knowledge naturally and enjoyably. This playful learning approach helps build a strong connection between young learners and their city's past, encouraging pride and awareness while fostering creativity and critical thinking.

Inesa Sulaj is a cultural heritage expert and museologist. She is IE's office manager and can be contacted at: inesa.sulaj@interpret-europe.net.



The Discover Durrës board game (Images: Inesa Sulaj)

Representation in the Balkans

Irina Ban (Croatia)

IE Croatia participated at the Balkan Museum Network conference.

The 'Meet, See, Do – Museum Trends' conference, which was organised by the Balkan Museum Network in partnership with Zagreb City Museum and NEMO – Network of European Museum Organisations, took place in Zagreb on April 28-29. It brought together museum and heritage professionals to explore emerging trends in the sector.

Over the course of two full days, participants engaged in thought-provoking discussions, practical workshops, and networking opportunities, sparking new ideas and fostering meaningful collaboration.

Interpret Europe Croatia participated in two slots. IE certified trainer Ivana Jagić Boljat gave a workshop on value-based heritage interpretation, offering participants the chance to explore how values can enrich interpretation and deepen participants' engagement. The session illustrated how the IE training programme has evolved to incorporate values-based interpretation and what this means for the roles of guides, writers, and planners.

In the second slot, Irina Ban, IE Country Coordinator Croatia, introduced the Interpret Europe association, its goals, membership benefits and activities of the association.

It was great to represent IE and reach a wide network of other HI professionals from across the Balkans.

Irina Ban is IE's Country Coordinator Croatia. She can be contacted at: irina.ban@interpret-europe.net.



**Irina Ban presenting at the conference
(Image: Balkan Museum Network)**

What's going on elsewhere?

Save the date!

Irina Ban (Croatia)

Croatian national Forum for Heritage Interpretation, November 8-9.

The third Croatian National Forum for Heritage Interpretation, which brings together Croatian professionals from various fields of cultural and natural heritage interpretation, including museum guides, nature park workers, tourist guides and other experts, will take place in the Trakošćan Castle on November 8-9 2025.

The title of the third forum is "New attire of the heritage" and it is dedicated to the topic of living heritage. Through lectures, practical workshops and study tours the forum will provide insight into best practices and innovations in the field of live interpretation.

The special guest speaker will be Mark Wallis, a live interpretation expert from the UK with extensive experience at the global level.

The forum is organised by Interpet Europe Croatia in partnership with Trakošćan Castle and Varaždin County Tourist Board.

We look forward to welcoming you!



7 Most Endangered

Europa Nostra

Nominations are now open for the Europa Nostra programme to recognise heritage at-risk.

All over Europe, our shared cultural heritage is under growing threat: from natural and human-made disasters to the impacts of climate-change, conflict, neglect, poorly planned development, violation of the rule of law, and lack of funding.

If you know of a heritage site or tradition in danger, nominate it for the 7 Most Endangered Programme 2026!

The 7 Most Endangered Programme is run by Europa Nostra – the leading European heritage civil society network – in partnership with the European Investment Bank Institute. It is supported by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, through the network project Europa Nostra Heritage Agora.

The Vice-President of Europa Nostra, Guy Clausse, stated: "Together with our partners, both European and national, we will provide civil society and technical expertise, identify possible sources of funding, and mobilise our wide network to support local efforts to save this year's 7 Most Endangered heritage sites in Europe. Our heritage and our culture play a key role in building more sustainable, inclusive, and democratic communities throughout our continent and beyond."

Since 2013, the 7 Most Endangered Programme has brought visibility, support, and urgent action to 70 monuments and heritage sites in 33 countries; and many of them have since been safeguarded for both present and future generations. Each site on the final list is eligible to receive an EIB Heritage Grant of €10,000 to support the first steps towards saving the site. See the sites selected since the launch of the programme.

Who can submit nominations?

Nominations are welcome from:

- Public and private organisations active in the heritage field, registered in a country that is a member of the Council of Europe; or
- Individual members of such organisations, who are permanent residents in a Council of Europe member country.

Each valid nomination must include at least 2 letters of support (in English) from public or private heritage

organisations, including at least one from a Europa Nostra Member or Associate Organisation (see the full list).

What type of endangered heritage can be nominated?

Both tangible and intangible heritage can be nominated, whether publicly or privately owned. We particularly welcome nominations in the following areas.

Climate-threatened heritage, endangered by current or anticipated hazards, including:

- Slow onset events, such as sea level rise or shifting seasonal patterns
- Rapid onset events, like wildfires or extreme flooding

Heritage in crisis-affected areas, including those affected by:

- Armed conflict
- Post-conflict reconstruction
- Natural disasters

Heritage at risk due to violations of European values, such as:

- Lack of citizen consultation for harmful development projects
- Destruction or neglect of minority heritage
- Loss of heritage due to forced migration, marginalisation, or poverty

We continue to welcome nominations of all other cases of endangered heritage, including those threatened by neglect or underfunding.

For more information: Call for Nominations (PDF)
<https://7mostendangered.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/7ME-2026-Call-for-Nominations.pdf>

For online submissions:
<https://7mostendangered.eu/nominate/>

Deadline for nominations: 15 September 2025



Europa Nostra 7 Most Endangered nominations

IE announcements

Interpret Europe conference 2026 – Save the date!

Bettina Lehnies (Germany)

We will meet 16-19 April in Faro, Portugal with the theme: Re-interpreting heritage in the light of Faro.

Interpret Europe's Conference Coordinator Bettina Lehnies and Country Coordinator Portugal, Pedro Morais, are just back from Faro where they spent some packed and exciting days. It's now time to bring all their impressions together to provide a memorable conference programme for you.

The old town of Faro enchants and captivates with a labyrinth of narrow cobbled streets lined with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century houses and a Gothic cathedral at its centre where you find many traces of its history and feel the spirit of the city's eventful past.

Off Faro's shore lies the Parque Natural da Ria Formosa, a labyrinth of canals, islands, salt marshes, mudflats and sandbanks which attracts a great range of marine life and migratory birds and is the most important natural resource in the south of Portugal.

While we are still discussing the possibilities, developing new ideas and discarding others to create the next exciting conference for you, it is certain that we cannot possibly gather in Faro without talking about the Faro Convention. The Council of Europe's Faro Convention of 2005 was a groundbreaking

milestone towards a value-based and more inclusive understanding of heritage. Although written for the field of cultural heritage, its values and principles can inspire nature interpretation in the same way. Today, the Faro Convention is even more relevant than ever, while its potential to enhance theory and practice of all heritage interpretation is still not fully embraced.

Let's come together and reflect on the ethics and methods of heritage interpretation related to the Faro spirit, aiming to engage diverse heritage communities in interpretive co-creation.

You can learn what the Faro convention is about here: <https://rm.coe.int/1680083746>

If you want to find out a little more about Faro and our hosting partners, please keep an eye on the conference website and information will be added as we have it: www.interpreteuropeconference.net.

We will use the summer to provide more information soon and issue the call for papers by October.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or suggestions, or would like to offer your support, please contact Bettina Lehnies at: bettina.lehnies@interpret-europe.net.



 Interpret Europe
European Association for Heritage Interpretation

 SCIAENA
Science & Culture in Archaeology & Nature

interpret europe conference 2026

Re-interpreting heritage in the light of Faro

16-19 April 2026 in Faro, Portugal

#iecon26

Learning Landscapes: The new call

Vanessa Vaio (Italy)

Ready to turn your region into a Learning Landscape? Help shape a future where heritage inspires connection, care and co-creation.

Together with UNESCO, Interpret Europe has developed the Learning Landscapes initiative – an innovative approach to transforming regions into vibrant spaces where heritage connects people, strengthens communities, and inspires action for a shared future.

At the heart of this initiative is the creation of local stakeholder networks that co-design meaningful heritage experiences. The aim? To make heritage more relevant in people's lives – and people more engaged in the stewardship of our common world.

To make this happen, capacity building plays a central role. IE experts train and mentor local interpretive agents in developing place-based interpretive strategies through a series of co-creative workshops. In parallel, trainers implement IE's tried-and-tested course programme to support local professionals in designing plans for heritage sites and interpretive services that align with them.

The Learning Landscapes concept has been in pilot phase since 2024, with encouraging progress in several regions across Europe. As we approach the end of this initial phase in early 2026, we are preparing to launch six new Learning Landscapes – and we warmly invite you to consider whether your region could be one of them.

Are you ready to take this step?

Here's what we're looking for:

- A notable number of different heritage sites or properties
- Around five committed organisations willing to form a local steering group
- A diverse network of 30–50 stakeholders ready to co-create the interpretive strategy
- The readiness of 50–80 professionals to be engaged in the training and capacity-building process

If this sounds like your region—or you're curious about how to get there—we'd love to hear from you.

Participating regions must secure funding independently, but the programme is strongly aligned with current EU priorities – such as participation, inclusion, co-creation in tourism and heritage, community empowerment, peace building, and sustainable development. Regions are therefore encouraged to explore suitable funding sources and prepare their applications in the coming months.

If you'd like to learn more about how to join the Learning Landscapes movement, get in touch at: office@interpret-europe.net.

Let's reimagine the role of heritage—together.



Interpretive walk at the Wadden Sea
(Image: Thorsten Ludwig)

Welcome new members

Business members

IMPACT HUB ATHENS, Greece

Individual members

António José Almeida, Portugal
Dejan Andjelic, Serbia
Nataša Babić, Croatia
Iulia Balint, Romania
Ema Borz, Romania
Teodora Brankovic, Serbia
Andrea Brlobuš, Croatia
Anastasia Chatziioannou, Greece
Zainea Constantin, Romania
Cristina Constantin, Romania
Tanja Cupac, Serbia
Danijela Djokic Pantic, Serbia
Nemanja Djordjevic, Serbia
Jelena Đurman Babić, Croatia
Mario Flury, Switzerland
Szabo Gabriel, Romania
Sladjana Glišić, Serbia
Anna Gondová, Slovakia
Jovana Jovanovic, Serbia
Ingrid Károlyová, Slovakia
Zuzana Kertysova, Slovakia
Petra Litviková, Czech Republic
Lorka Lončar Uvodić, Croatia
Ivana Lončarek, Croatia
Kopenetz Lorand Marton, Romania
Kristina Majcen, Croatia
Crina Mares, Romania
Valentina Meštrić, Croatia
Bogdan Milic, Serbia
Olivera Milovic, Serbia
Igor Mišurović, Serbia
Tanja Mravlinčić, Croatia
Nikola Muškić, Serbia
Miljan Nikolić, Serbia
Milica Nikolić, Serbia
Stefana Pascu, Romania
Dijana Perišić Vukobratović, Croatia
Lyce Saathof, Netherlands
Ivana Samardzic, Serbia
Slobodan Stepić, Serbia
Ioana Suceava, Romania
Orsolya Szilágyi, Romania
Jovana Trailović, Serbia
Marko Vasiljevic, Serbia
Sorana Vlad, Romania
Sreten Živković, Serbia
Theodora Zoumpa, Greece
Marija Petrović, Serbia

Welcome new coordinators

Julia Janowska - Country Coordinator Poland



I live in Warsaw and work for the Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejówek as Head of the Education Department. I am an art historian and Polish philologist (I graduated from the University of Warsaw), an educator and a museum professional passionate about culture for many years. In my work at the museum, I place a strong emphasis on incorporating interpretive elements within educational activities and advocate for the implementation of heritage interpretation as a key method for carrying out museum activities. I discovered heritage interpretation in my professional journey thanks to Barbara Gołębiowska, who inspired me with her passion and encouraged me to take part in workshops organized by our colleagues from the Małopolska Institute of Culture in Kraków.

Since then, I've been continuously striving to grow and deepen my understanding of heritage interpretation. I attended the IE Certified Interpretive Writer course and then took part in the conference in Koper where I conducted a workshop entitled 'Language as a powerful tool: how to use it ethically?' I have become a dedicated ambassador for interpretation. In 2023, I attended also the IE Certified Interpretive Trainer course and received my certificate. I believe that all these skills and experiences will help me promote knowledge about heritage interpretation in Poland—its importance for discovering, understanding and protecting the artifacts of the past, as well as for recognizing their relevance in the present and for the future. I believe that through our joint efforts, we will be able to build new collaborations and organize courses, meetings and workshops, thanks to which heritage interpretation will become a methodology widely recognized by both the museum and academic communities.

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

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/>

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/>

Interpret Europe conference 2026

16-19 April 2026

Faro, Portugal

<https://www.interpreteuropeconference.net>

And finally...

Thank you for your contributions.

Sunny summer 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/>

Deadline for contributions for the autumn 2025 edition: Sunday 31 August 2025

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDbwylo-tJugfsKXIEI21fQ>

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

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