

PROTECTING
CULTURAL
HERITAGE
AT RISK



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ProCULTHER-NET 2
PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE
FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISASTERS - NETWORK

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Harnessing collective
knowledge to strengthen
cultural heritage resilience

The contribution of EU-funded
projects in addressing growing
multiple risks

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14 May 2025
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Concept Note

Harnessing collective knowledge to strengthen cultural heritage resilience: the contribution of EU-funded projects in addressing growing multiple risks

International Workshop

(Rome and on-line)

14 May 2025

Background

[PROCULTHER-NET 2](#) (Protecting Cultural Heritage from the Consequences of Disasters- Network 2) is a DG ECHO-funded project aiming to consolidate the **inclusion of the protection of cultural heritage at risk** in the processes and structures of the **Union Civil Protection Mechanism - UCPM**.

With the aim of nurturing knowledge processes and structures within the **Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network-UCPKN**, the current phase of PROCULTHER-NET focuses on gathering technical and operational elements to support the development of a cultural heritage protection framework that addresses both emerging risks and the critical need for dedicated governance and capacity to tackle them.

At the same time, PROCULTHER-NET 2 advocates for a stronger **interdisciplinary approach** fostering a constant integration of knowledge sharing process among different stakeholders, to allow for a comprehensive network, able to support and complement the efforts made by the European Union to strengthen cooperation between the UCPM Member and Participating States (MS/PS) in the field of civil protection.

Addressing new challenges through shared technical and operational capacities

The year 2024 has seen new developments in the field of cultural heritage protection in times of crisis, especially in the wake of the **70th Anniversary of the Hague Convention** for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the event of Armed Conflicts. This has been particularly relevant considering the current historical context, where multiple conflicts, combined with the growing impact of climate-related hazards, are making cultural heritage increasingly vulnerable.

Among the various sectors on which the UCPM has intervened, the need to also protect cultural heritage at risk has increasingly emerged because it is widely recognized how deeply this field is linked to the **resilience of communities** at risk. In addition, these new emerging risks have called for specific interventions on cultural heritage protection, demonstrating the importance of increasing **interoperability standards** and **preparedness capacities** for the inclusion of cultural heritage protection in UCPM operational structures, also in crisis/conflict contexts.

In this sense, PROCULTHER-NET calls for the establishment of a risk governance specifically dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage at each national level, including both disaster risk management and cultural heritage stakeholders to define mechanisms, strategies, plans and based on appropriate risk-informed processes, synergistically combined and optimised at European level. Furthermore, PROCULTHER-NET recognises that the inclusion of cultural heritage in disaster risk management processes is primarily based on cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary and inter-agency collaboration based on knowledge transfer initiatives. Thus, it advocates for leveraging on the spaces provided by the UCPKN to discuss needs, interests, opportunities, strategies and exchange best practices and lessons learned to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable integration of the sector within the UCPM structures.

In this scenario, the integration of different actors and outcomes, including other EU and UCPM-funded projects and results, should enable a constructive exchange that can produce impacts in line with the needs and interests emerging in the field.

Main goals of the international workshop

The aim of the workshop is to provide a dedicated space for debating needs, interests, opportunities, strategies, facilitating the exchange among complementary cultural heritage protection and disaster risk management initiatives across Europe.

These initiatives have been at the core of one of the activities of the PROCULTHER-NET 2 project, which led to the development of the Mapping of Relevant Initiatives within the EU and UCPM, including an evaluation of potential synergies. This effort was conceived with a dual purpose: to highlight the coherence among the various technical proposals available within the EU and the UCPKN, and to identify projects and initiatives through which PROCULTHER-NET can foster synergies and implement joint actions aimed at integrating cultural heritage protection into disaster risk management processes.

Through this mapping, the project has identified initiatives whose objectives could be adapted or leveraged to facilitate the integration of cultural heritage protection into activities carried out by specialist capacities available at the European level. This approach not only enhances coordination among EU-funded projects but also fosters cross-fertilization, improving interoperability and ensuring high-quality standards.

To build on these efforts, the international workshop will serve as a platform to showcase and discuss these elements by:

1. Pooling extra-project practices that can enhance dialogue within the thematic community.
2. Creating effective connections between UCPM and EU entities active in various fields related to cultural heritage and disaster risk management, including policymakers, decision-makers, practitioners, and researchers.

The first session will focus on **strategic frameworks for cultural heritage protection**, promoting the paradigm shift that integrates cultural heritage into disaster risk management while simultaneously strengthening protection structures and procedures. The discussion will explore the role of communities in safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the new European strategy for future research pathways, the cooperation among actors from different fields to address growing climate-induced risks and important lessons learned from UCPM MS/PS civil protection recent experience in implementing national capacities for cultural heritage protection, including in the context of complex crisis. These topics will shape the debate on how Europe is preparing to tackle these emerging challenges.

The second session will bring together actors from the **scientific and technological fields**. Tools and methods tested within scientific research programs or disaster risk management initiatives will be presented to assess whether a common path can be envisioned for a cross-cutting approach, leading to more effective emergency management.

The third and final session will deal with **preparedness and training**, featuring experiences involving both professionals and the public. The importance of exercises and training will be highlighted through testimonials from various European initiatives.

Each session will allow selected panellists to share a presentation according to their main topic of action. At the end of each session a thirty-minute roundtable discussion moderated by a chairman will engage the panellists on the floor and the audience: this will allow to identify complementarities and explore possible synergies to be further developed among UCPM and EU initiatives already ongoing.

Below are the key elements that panellists will be asked to elaborate on during the discussion, and on which further exploration will be sought with the audience:

Strategic frameworks	What are the key elements that could contribute to establish a governance for the protection of cultural heritage in emergency How can the outputs of your initiative contribute to the establishment of such a governance
Tools\innovation	Explain why the tool\outcomes of your research\project\initiative can be considered sustainable/replicable Explain how the tool\outcomes of your research\project\initiative can contribute to establish common standards Explain how (or if) they can be scalable at European level
Training\Preparedness	Propose 3 words that make a training connecting disaster risk management and cultural heritage protection effective Suggest to what extent the UCPKN can contribute to strengthening the preparation and knowledge acquired during training courses, study visits and other knowledge sharing actions; Suggest how the UCPKN can improve knowledge transfer activities between and within the two sectors of the cultural heritage protection and disaster risk management

How to get involved

Due to the European focus of the project, the international workshop is particularly addressed to UCPM MS/PS and International Organisations, interested in joining the processes undertaken by the PROCULTHER-NET 2 project. Nevertheless, the workshop will be also open to non-European countries and concerned actors having relevant practices in the development of methods/tools in this field or simply interested in contributing to the objectives of the event.

To allow the widest participation of European and international stakeholders, the event is scheduled to take place in-person and online. Discussions will be open only to registered participants; their proactive contribution will be ensured through the messaging services provided by the videoconferencing platform.

PROCULTHER-NET can cover the mission expenses of invited panellists, unless the budget allocated to their project/initiative already includes funds for attending such events.

To join the workshop, please click [here](#) or scan the QR code on the first page.