



Italy-North Macedonia knowledge exchange in Conservation and Innovative Management of Cultural Heritage

The Conservation and Restoration Centre “La Venaria Reale” (CCR), Fondazione Santagata for the Economics of Culture, the Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage (DPCH) of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of North Macedonia and ICOMOS Macedonia, are pleased to announce the start of the project “Italy-North Macedonia knowledge exchange in conservation and innovative management of cultural heritage”, co-funded by the 2021 of CEI – Central European Initiative.

The project is one of the 7 selected from the 65 participating in the 2021 KEP call for proposals, with funding made available by Italy through the CEI Fund at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

“Italy-North Macedonia knowledge exchange in conservation and innovative management of cultural heritage” is a 12 month-long initiative aiming at strengthening the technical and management skills of professionals involved in cultural heritage safeguard in the Republic of North Macedonia, to boost their capacity to develop sustainable, efficient and holistic conservation strategies.

In particular, the objectives of the project are to:

- Enhance the conservation and the innovative management of cultural heritage in the Central European region;
- Promote knowledge transfer and sharing around the complex process of protection and sustainable development of cultural heritage;
- Strengthen international collaborative networks;
- Raise awareness on the potential of cultural policies to foster intercultural dialogue, preserve the cultural and linguistic identity of minority groups and ensure equal access to knowledge.

The Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage has identified as the main present need the development of training programmes for the safeguard of the immovable heritage, specifically for archaeological sites and medieval churches.

ICOMOS Macedonia, as a further beneficiary entity, gathers a pool of expert members who strive to strengthen the knowledge and skills of the Macedonian professional heritage community and popularize Macedonian cultural heritage. Both The DPCH and ICOMOS Macedonia will profit from the specialized training on state-of-the-art heritage conservation and management, bridging the gap and linking the offered skills and knowledge to the Macedonian context.



The Conservation and Restoration Centre “La Venaria Reale”, with its wide technical and scientific expertise in the conservation of natural and artificial stone materials, such as mural paintings, mosaics, stuccoes and mortars (all constituting the identified heritage at risk on the Republic of North Macedonia territory), will focus the didactical activity on the guidelines and the methodological approach in conservation interventions. Teaching modules will face methodological approach items, material characterization, preventive and remedial conservation, risk assessment and maintenance issues.

Fondazione Santagata, with its expertise on cultural economics, cultural heritage management (including UNESCO Conventions and guidelines) and culture-led local development, will focus the training activities on enhancing and updating practitioners’ understanding of approaches and methodologies adopted at the international level to secure the role of heritage in sustainable development, international relations, and community building participation, and international relations.

To maximize the match between the needs of Macedonian practitioners and the proposed training contents, the partners will conduct a joint preparatory co-designing activity to finalise the didactical modules.

Intercultural aspects, interdisciplinary issues and specificity of identified trainees’ target group will be tackled to optimize the elaboration of topics (e.g. find fitting case studies to analyse). The capacity-building activities will be developed through online didactical modules and in-person lectures, including on-site practical training.

After the training, Fondazione Santagata and the Conservation and Restoration Centre “La Venaria Reale” will support training participants in the development of projects for cultural heritage conservation, management and enhancement that are relevant to their organisations’ operations.

Concerning the dissemination and networking activities of the project, 10 Macedonian young professionals will be involved and participate in the *CCR Young Professional Forum - Emerging Skills for Heritage Conservation 2022*. This digital event will act as the mouthpiece for the project by hosting in a virtual space the international expertise exchange between CEI young professionals with the rest of the world.

In conclusion, one person from DPCH will be invited to take part in the *International Academy on UNESCO Designations and Sustainable Development*, organised by Fondazione Santagata in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe. The programme also represents a valuable opportunity to exchange knowledge with professionals from other European countries and foster an international network.

