The annual European Heritage Volunteers Conference is held this year under the theme "Heritage and People", jointly organised by European Heritage Volunteers and the Open-Air Museum of Lithuania in Rumšiškės, Lithuania.

The 2023 conference will focus on two central pillars illustrating the link between heritage and people: First, the conference will delve into the realms of safeguarding and conserving historical landscapes, vernacular architecture, and traditional crafts. Second, the event will shine a spotlight on the invaluable role of community involvement and voluntary engagement for cultural heritage.

The chosen venue, the Open-Air Museum of Lithuania, is a beacon of this year's theme. As one of Europe's largest ethnographic open-air museums, it boasts a staggering collection of over 90,000 exhibits, vividly depicting the lives, work, and traditions of Lithuania's peasants, farmers, and townspeople. Established in 1966 in Rumšiškės, it gracefully rests along the picturesque shores of Kaunas Lagoon.

The 2023 European Heritage Volunteers Conference will explore the intricate connections of cultural heritage with people and communities, showcasing the vital importance of the transmission of traditional skills and craftsmanship across generations as well as the significance of voluntary engagement for heritage awareness, heritage conservation, and revitalisation of heritage sites.

The 2023 conference will continue a tradition of providing a platform to share good practices, foster enriching exchanges among experts, and offer insights from heritage professionals engaged in projects dedicated to preserving traditional skills and craftsmanship. The attendees will include representatives from heritage institutions, universities, and partners within the extensive European Heritage Volunteers Network. The event will be a gathering to celebrate "Heritage and People," while paying homage to heritage as a living, breathing entity that shapes our identities, our communities, and the future of Europe.

Conference language is English. Participation is free of charge. Only in presence – no online transmission. The application forms can be found at our homepage www.heritagevolunteers.eu (in the section for annual conferences (above and left side); the filled form should be submitted via the Jotform link or sent by email to info@heritagevolunteers.eu until September 30th, 2023.

Organisers: Support provided by:
09:00 Opening

Welcoming address –
Gita Šaprauskaitė, Director of the Open-Air Museum of Lithuania

Welcoming address –
Bert Ludwig, Director of European Heritage Volunteers

Welcoming address –
Sigita Bugenienė, Advisor at the Cultural Heritage Policy Group at the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania

09:15 Part A – Vernacular architecture and traditional skills

09:15 Keynote speech
Reflections about vernacular architecture and sustainability –
Valentina Cristini, Conservation Architect & Professor at the Polytechnic University Valencia, Spain

09:45 Session 1 – Transmission of knowledge and skills in traditional crafts
Accumulation and dissemination of knowledge and skills used in traditional Balkan architecture –
Kubrat Milev, Architect & Member of Association Meshtra – Traditional Knowledge and Crafts, Bulgaria

Learning traditional building techniques at the Open-Air Museum –
Rasa Bertasiūtė, Architect & Specialist for Cultural Heritage at the Open-Air Museum of Lithuania

Workshops about conservation of immovable monuments –
Edwin Wilibik, Head of the Rural Construction Department of the Museum of Agriculture in Ciechanowice, Poland

Moderation: Bert Ludwig

12:45 Lunch Break

12:45 Part B – Community involvement and voluntary engagement for heritage

13:45 Keynote speeches
The importance of community involvement in the World Heritage context –
Friederike Hansell, German Federal Foreign Office, Germany

Community involvement in the preservation of cultural heritage: Examples from Latvia –
President of ICOMOS Latvia & Head of Cēsis History and Art Museum, Latvia

Moderation: Juan Carlos Barrientos García

14:45 Session 4 – Examples of locally initiated community engagement for heritage
Potentials and challenges of the engagement of the local community for a heritage site of national importance –
Rudite Vasilie, Local Activist and Curator of Lielstraupe Castle, Latvia

Genius Loci: A case study of community participation in the urban vision of their neighbourhood –
Vita Gelūnienė, Member of Šančių Bendruomenė Association, Kaunas, Lithuania

Local communities engaging for heritage conservation and rural development –
Iva Taralezhkova, Board Chair, Devetaki Plateau Association, Bulgaria

Moderation: Marian Konjević

15:45 Coffee break

16:00 Session 5 – Examples of external support for community-driven heritage engagement

Perennial engagement of European Heritage Volunteers for the cultural heritage of Prespa Lake Area, Albania –
Valentina Cristini, Conservation Architect & Professor at the Polytechnic University Valencia, Spain and Bert Ludwig, Director of European Heritage Volunteers

Rota du fresco, Portugal: An instrument to valorise the cultural heritage of Alentejo region towards local communities and tourists –
Angelica Vedana, BA History, MA Cultural Heritage & PhD Candidate

Gornji Stoliv, Montenegro: Efforts to conserve the authenticity of an abandoned village under threat of tourism –
Marian Konjević, Project Coordinator at European Heritage Volunteers

Community involvement at Burghauptmannschaft Österreich –
Roland Lehner, Former Head of Construction Department at Burghauptmannschaft Österreich, Austria

Moderation: Juan Carlos Barrientos García

17:15 Session 6 – Voluntary engagement for heritage within the European Heritage Volunteers Programme

Tautvydas Bokmota, BA Geography, MA Spatial Planning & MA Heritage Studies

Amanda Jazmin Hosinsky Díaz, BA Conservation and Restoration & MA Cultural Management and Research

Miguel Senra Hermana, BA History & MA Heritage Management and Museum Studies

Viktorija Silvinškaitė, BA English Philology & MA Cultural Heritage and Tourism

Angelica Vedana, BA History, MA Cultural Heritage & PhD Candidate

Moderation: Marian Konjević

18:00 Closing words