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PRESS RELEASE

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European Heritage Award/ Europa Nostra Award 2024 for the National Trust of Georgia

Brussels / The Hague, 30 May 2024

The [European Commission](#) and [Europa Nostra](#) today announced the **2024 winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards**, co-funded by the [Creative Europe](#) programme of the European Union. This year, Europe's most prestigious awards for heritage go to **26 outstanding winners from 18 countries** across the continent (*see the full list below*).

Among this year's winners is the National Trust of Georgia for the citizens' rehabilitation of the Tsiskarauli Tower in Akhieli.

Over three years, international volunteers worked with the local community to restore the Tsiskarauli Tower, a remote monument which was at risk of collapse. The project has brought much-needed attention to the isolated mountain community of Khevsureti, and had significant impact at both local and international levels in raising awareness of the value of Georgian heritage.

The [International National Trusts Organisation \(INTO\)](#) was the lead partner, working in close collaboration with the National Trust of Georgia and [REMPART](#) (France). The project was supported by a grant from ALIPH - the International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas.

The mediaeval watchtower in the Caucasus Mountains witnessed wars, occupations and migrations over the centuries, and was severely damaged in 2001 by a Russian missile during the Second Chechen war. 46 Georgian and international citizens worked alongside technical experts and traditional craftspeople to restore the tower, which is now a model for the rehabilitation of Georgian defensive architecture.

As well as learning new skills in stonemasonry and path building, participants experienced one another's intangible heritage, thus showing the peacebuilding capacity of collective restoration. The work has also raised the profile of volunteering in Georgia and provided sought-after opportunities for young people to engage with their heritage, building local pride and identity.

Marine Mizandari, Co-chair, National Trust for Georgia said: *"This was a collaborative European heritage project on a scale I have never seen before in Georgia. We've seen multiple benefits and impacts of this joint initiative already: Through this project, we have strengthened the local community, increased the potential of eco-tourism in this remote region, and put a solid international network of young volunteers in place. Through the extensive media coverage, we have raised awareness of the uniqueness of Georgia's cultural heritage and the importance of its protection, both within the country and internationally. I am convinced that the fully rehabilitated tower will continue to be a focal point around which new initiatives can flourish."*

Alongside the tower's stabilisation, a large focus of this project was knowledge sharing and capacity building within the National Trust of Georgia. Over two secondments in France and the UK, the staff of the National Trust of Georgia learnt from English and French models of volunteerism, and about the stewardship of remote heritage sites.

The project faced many challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and a major landslide. Against all odds, the Tsiskarauli Tower carries a new, positive layer of history, marked by international collaboration. [This short film](#) (5 minutes) shows the project coming to fruition.

"The Citizens' Rehabilitation of the Tsiskarauli Tower embodies excellence in heritage conservation through a holistic approach, integrating the restoration of built heritage, community engagement, international collaboration, and capacity-building, following the severe damage to the monument caused by a Russian missile fired during the Second Chechen war. Engaging in a broader network and consortium, the project provided a platform for the exchange of knowledge and culture", the Awards' [Jury](#) commented.

"The use of traditional materials and techniques has enhanced the authenticity of the work, while community engagement, involving locals, international volunteers, and the diaspora has created a sense of stewardship. The project has served as a catalyst for international cultural relations, peace, and trust building, demonstrating the power of heritage-led collaboration in overcoming conflict and rehabilitating local communities", the Jury concluded.

European Heritage Award/ Europa Nostra Award 2024

The winners were selected by the [Awards' Jury](#), composed of 12 heritage experts from across Europe, upon evaluation of the applications by the [Selection Committees](#). A total of 206 eligible applications to this year's Awards were submitted by organisations and individuals from 38 European countries.

Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"Our cultural heritage is our collective treasure, a bridge connecting our past, present and future. It holds a special place in our hearts and daily lives, fostering a sense of belonging and identity. The European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards highlight the crucial role of exemplary projects and individuals dedicated to preserving and promoting our rich heritage. I warmly congratulate this year's winners on their outstanding achievements."*

Cecilia Bartoli, the world-renowned mezzo-soprano and President of Europa Nostra, stated: *"My heartfelt congratulations to this year's winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards on their well-deserved recognition. By honouring these fantastic creative projects, we also demonstrate our great commitment to protecting our shared cultural heritage, which is vital for building a more united, sustainable and beautiful Europe. May their inspiring examples be followed by many citizens – heritage professionals, volunteers and lovers – public organisations and private companies across our continent and beyond."*

The winners will be celebrated at the **European Heritage Awards Ceremony 2024 on 7 October** at the Romanian Athenaeum, the most prestigious concert hall in Bucharest, Romania, which recently received a [European Heritage Label](#) in recognition of its European significance. This high-profile event will be co-hosted by the European Commissioner **Iliana Ivanova** and Europa Nostra's Executive President **Hermann Parzinger**. During the ceremony, the Grand Prix laureates and the Public Choice Award winner, chosen from among this year's winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards and entitled to receive €10,000 each, will be announced.

The ceremony will be a highlight of the [European Cultural Heritage Summit 2024](#) which will take place on 6-8 October in Bucharest. The Summit, co-funded by the European Union, is organised by Europa Nostra in close cooperation with heritage organisations and partners, both public and private, in Romania.

Heritage supporters and enthusiasts are now encouraged to discover the winners and [vote online to decide who will win the Public Choice Award 2024](#), entitled to receive a monetary award of €10,000. You can cast your vote until 22 September.

Background

INTO: <https://www.into.org>

INTO is the UK based organisation which brings the global National Trust family together to share knowledge and tools for the protection of cultural and natural heritage. With 100 members worldwide, we are a global movement of people who care about nature and culture and are inspired to celebrate and protect it. Our programmes and projects facilitate collaboration in the international heritage sector.

INTO, provides a network for international heritage organisations to work together for global conservation. The National Trust was a lead partner in setting up the organisation and remains close to INTO.

Website: <http://www.into.org>

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European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards

The [European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards](#) were launched by the European Commission in 2002 and have been run by Europa Nostra ever since. For 22 years, the Awards have been a key tool to recognise and promote the multiple values of heritage for Europe's society, economy and environment.

The Awards have highlighted and disseminated heritage excellence and best practices in Europe, encouraged the cross-border exchange of knowledge and connected heritage stakeholders in wider networks. The Awards have brought major benefits to the winners, such as greater (inter)national exposure, additional funding and increased visitor numbers. In addition, the Awards have championed a greater care for our shared heritage among Europe's citizens. For additional facts and figures about the Awards, please visit the [Awards website](#).

The Call for Entries for the 2025 edition of the Awards will open in Autumn 2024. Sign up for our [newsletter](#) to receive the Call once it is launched or visit www.europeanheritageawards.eu/apply for more information.

Europa Nostra

[Europa Nostra](#) is the European voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting cultural and natural heritage. It is a pan-European federation of heritage NGOs, supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals, covering over 40 countries. It is the largest and the most representative heritage network in Europe, maintaining close relations with the European Union, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and other international bodies. Founded in 1963, Europa Nostra celebrated its 60th anniversary last year.

Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through the [7 Most Endangered Programme](#). It celebrates and disseminates excellence through the [European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards](#). Europa Nostra actively contributes to the definition and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage, through a participatory dialogue with European Institutions and the coordination of the [European Heritage Alliance](#).

Europa Nostra has led the European consortium selected by the European Commission to run the [European Heritage Hub](#) pilot project (2023-2025). It is also an official partner of the [New European Bauhaus](#) initiative developed by the European Commission, and is a leading European member and supporter of the [Climate Heritage Network](#).

Creative Europe

[Creative Europe](#) is the EU programme that supports the cultural and creative sectors, enabling them to increase their contribution to Europe's society, economy and living environment. With a budget of €2.4 billion for 2021-2027, it supports organisations in the fields of heritage, performing arts, fine arts, interdisciplinary arts, publishing, film, TV, music, and video games as well as tens of thousands of artists, cultural and audiovisual professionals.

National Trust for Georgia

National Trust of Georgia champions the protection and preservation of the country's rich cultural heritage. The trust provides practical support for the preservation of buildings and land, as well as encouraging heritage awareness within Georgia.

Website: <http://www.nationaltrustofgeorgia.org.ge/>

Email: info@into.org

These are the winners of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2024 in five categories¹:

Conservation & Adaptive Reuse

[Royale Belge Building, Brussels, BELGIUM](#)
[Schulenburg Mansion, Gera, GERMANY](#)
[Ignacy Historic Mine, Rybnik, POLAND](#)
[Saxon Church in Alma Vii, ROMANIA](#)
[St. Michael's Church, Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA](#)
[Snow Wells, Sierra Espuña, SPAIN](#)

Research

[NewsEye: A Digital Investigator for Historical Newspapers, AUSTRIA/FINLAND/France/GERMANY](#)

Education, Training & Skills

[Teryan Cultural Center - Empowering Armenian Refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh, Yerevan, ARMENIA](#)
[Boulouki - Travelling Workshop on Traditional Building, GREECE](#)
[Traditional Farm Buildings Scheme, IRELAND](#)
[Serfenta Crafts Revitalisation Model, Cieszyn, POLAND](#)
[White Carpentry School, Narros del Castillo, SPAIN](#)

Citizens' Engagement & Awareness-raising

[The Square Kilometre, Ghent, BELGIUM](#)
[The Silence that Tore Down the Monument, Kamenska, CROATIA](#)
[Preserving the Community Halls for Local Civil Society Activities, FINLAND](#)
[Fortified Castles of Alsace Association, FRANCE](#)
[Citizens' Rehabilitation of the Tsiskarauli Tower, Akhieli, GEORGIA](#)
[International Festival of Classical Theatre for Youth, Syracuse, ITALY](#)
[Foundation for the Conservation of the Historical Estate Ockenburgh, The Hague, THE NETHERLANDS](#)

Heritage Champions

[Society of Friends of Dubrovnik Antiquities, CROATIA](#)
[Else "Sprossa" Rønnevig, Lillesand, NORWAY](#)
[Professor Piotr Gerber, Wrocław, POLAND](#)

Europa Nostra Awards 2024 for outstanding projects from the UK

This year, Europa Nostra Awards go to four remarkable heritage projects from a European country not taking part in the EU Creative Europe programme.

[Gideon Tapestries, Hardwick Hall](#) (Conservation & Adaptive Reuse category)
[Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings, Shrewsbury](#) (Conservation & Adaptive Reuse category)
[Westminster Hall, London](#) (Conservation & Adaptive Reuse category)
[Marcus Binney CBE, OBE Hon FRIBA FSA](#) (Heritage Champions category)

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TO FIND OUT MORE

[Press release in various languages](#)

About each Award winner:

[Information and Jury's comments](#)
[Videos](#) (in high resolution)
[Photos & e-banners](#) (in high resolution)

[Creative Europe website](#)

¹ The winners are listed alphabetically by country