

ANNUAL  
REPORT **2023**

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## Mission, Vision, Values

Future for Religious Heritage (FRH) was founded in 2011 as an organisation dedicated to the safeguarding of Europe's diverse and unique religious heritage. It is the only independent, non-faith, and non-profit network of charities and conservation departments of governmental, religious and university institutions, and other professionals and individuals working to protect religious heritage buildings across Europe, with over 240 members in 45 countries.

### MISSION

- FRH works to ensure the promotion and safeguarding of Europe's religious heritage, by bringing together organisations and individuals in a Europe-wide network and participating in forums and advocacy networks in order to bring the voice of religious heritage to relevant stakeholders and policymakers.

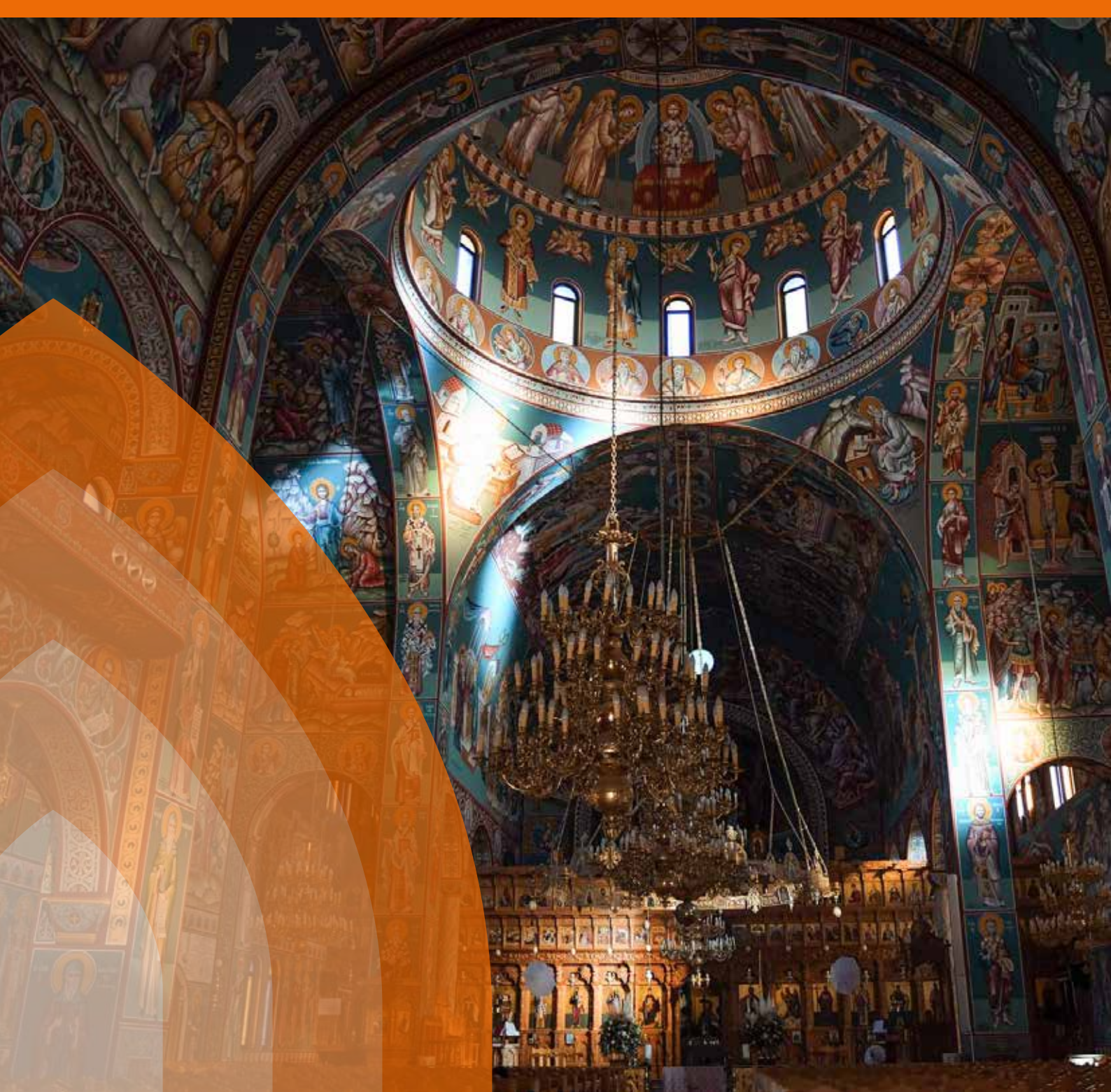
### VISION

- **Unite** – FRH consists of over 80 organisations and 160 professionals from 45 countries, seeking to promote and enhance good practices, project development and professional collaboration with all those interested in safeguarding Europe's historic places of worship as well as intangible religious heritage.
- **Promote** – FRH promotes the value of religious heritage by raising public interest and encouraging community engagement in the conservation and safeguarding of Europe's religious heritage.
- **Protect** – FRH works closely with EU policymakers and relevant cultural heritage stakeholders and forums. It shares relevant information and recommendations regarding the implementation of legislation that promotes community engagement, sustainability, cultural preservation, and innovation around religious heritage. This includes finding innovative solutions for preserving historic places of worship including extended use and reuse, to avoid demolition or abandonment.

### VALUES

- **Engagement** – reaching out to relevant communities, professionals, policymakers, and the public.
- **Sustainability** – working towards the sustainability of religious heritage to ensure it can be passed on to future generations.
- **Protection** – safeguarding Europe's tangible and intangible religious heritage; avoiding the abandonment and destruction of this invaluable European heritage.
- **Innovation** – finding new and innovative ways to protect historic places of worship.

**Since 2017, FRH is one of the 36 European networks receiving funding from the Creative Europe Programme (EACEA) of the European Commission. This support is aimed at the operation, growth and consolidation of the network.**



© image: Sophie Michael - Churches - Cyprus in Athienou & Kelia

## President's Report

In 2023, we were able to (re)confirm the overwhelming support of European citizens to their religious heritage through a Europe-wide survey which echoed the findings of our previous survey from 2014. The survey showed that 81% of Europeans see religious heritage as key for their local communities' present and future life, as an integral part of their cultural identity, and as a space of great historical, architectural and artistic value.

However, various challenges continue to threaten this rich cultural heritage.

The FRH Biennial Conference 2023 "Sustainable European Religious Heritage" addressed one of the most urgent challenges, sustainability, offering a broader view of the topic through four of its dimensions: economic, ecological, social and cultural sustainability. Our first physical conference following the COVID-19 pandemic was an excellent opportunity to once again bring together representatives of heritage organisations, researchers, policymakers, practitioners and civil society in person, with a common goal: to demonstrate the resilience and adaptability of religious heritage in the current scenario and to encourage the sector to take united action to ensure its future. All this was reflected in the key findings we published after the conference.

We were proud to successfully launch the second edition of our Religious Heritage Innovator of the Year award, aimed at showcasing outstanding examples of innovation in religious heritage across Europe. The overall winner of this edition was an exemplary project to ensure that York Minster (UK), a Gothic building that receives over 700,000 visitors a year, remains a welcoming space for the local community, where appreciation of cultural heritage is encouraged and surrounded by green spaces that contribute to biodiversity and citizen well-being. Alongside it, four projects promoting knowledge of Jewish heritage, revitalisation of places of worship through contemporary art and enhancing citizens' access to historic places of worship were selected as examples of good practice from across Europe.

This year has also been marked by our efforts to raise awareness of the importance of preserving heritage crafts, coinciding with the European Year of Skills 2023. To this end, we interviewed craftspeople from various sectors and launched a survey to better understand the current landscape of heritage crafts in Europe and the challenges that threaten their future. The results will be used to develop future policy recommendations in an area that, in our view, does not receive sufficient attention in national and European cultural and education policies.

We do not forget the long-lasting impact of the European Year of Youth 2022 in FRH, which ultimately resulted in the creation of a Young Professionals and Researchers Working Group at the end of 2023. This group represents the consolidation of our efforts to involve young people and will from now on provide our network with recommendations on the challenges faced by young professionals in the sector and how to better integrate them, and will ensure that a youth perspective is present in all our activities.

I do not doubt that with a non-stop increasing number of members from all over Europe, and a solid Council and Advisory board, the FRH family embarks on another exciting year looking forward to building on this year's success together with our members.

**Pilar G. Bahamonde**  
FRH President





© image: Aleksandra Wilk - St. Marinus und Anian in the morning mist - Irschenberg, Germany



## Advisory Board President's Report

The European cultural heritage sector and citizens continue mobilising in support of religious heritage. The overwhelming response to our Photo Competition, with over 2,000 photographs received from across Europe, Africa, North and South America, and Asia, speaks volumes about the significance of religious heritage for local communities around the world. The results of our latest Europe-wide survey further reinforce this central role in today's European society: more than 80% of Europeans say that religious heritage is a vital part of their local identity and support the opening of these sites to tourism and other cultural uses that are respectful and compatible with them.

On the other hand, we look with great concern at how the devastating situation in Ukraine did not improve but worsened. This issue was addressed at our 2023 Biennial Conference by Ukrainian guest speaker Kateryna Zorya, who has been involved in the documentation of damaged and destroyed places and post-conflict recovery efforts in Ukraine. According to the latest data from the Religion on Fire project, in which she is involved, more than 400 religious sites have been damaged or destroyed in the country since February 2022. In her presentation, Ms Zorya provided a crucial glimpse into the challenges faced by Ukrainian churches, synagogues and other religious sites and the importance of preserving their cultural heritage amid the ongoing conflict.

In light of this international scenario, it is encouraging to see countries taking steps to safeguard and preserve their religious heritage. The launch in France of a national plan for the protection of religious heritage in the run-up to the reopening of Notre Dame (scheduled for December 2024) is a milestone towards a comprehensive inventory of religious heritage and the elaboration of a plan to protect it. We are extremely proud to be one of the actors invited to offer our expertise to support this project and the achievement of successful results.

2023 has been a busy year for the EU's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.

First, with the appointment of Iliana Ivanova as the new Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth after the resignation of Mariya Gabriel. Secondly, the proposed cut of EUR 40 million in the budget of the Creative Europe programme, was received with great concern by the creative and cultural sector, including FRH which is one of the 36 European networks funded by this programme. In the end, the Parliament and the Council succeeded in reversing the proposal. The new call for applications has been launched with a budget of 335 million euros.

Our 4 years application proposal to the new Creative Europe call is dedicated to advancing the FRH network's growth and further development. If granted, this support will be a recognition of the relevance of the issue at the European level and will allow FRH to continue to advocate for the sector by supporting its members in national/regional advocacy campaigns, through its network consultations and policy recommendations, as well as through FRH's participation in multi-level forums.

I am convinced that FRH will continue to be the voice of religious heritage in Europe, highlighting the sector's solutions to common challenges, and building bridges between public institutions, policymakers and civil society.

**Lilian Grootswagers-Theuns**  
Advisory Board President

Owner of Erfgoed.nu, the Netherlands. Founding member and former secretary of FRH Council. She represents FRH in the Commissions Cultural Heritage Expert group.





© image: Juliet Lehair - Grandeur in Ruins, St Andrew Church - Covehithe, Suffolk, England

## Executive Officer's report

FRH conducts various activities aimed at safeguarding Europe's religious heritage. These can mostly be grouped into four categories: membership, advocacy, awareness raising and specific projects.

### Membership

FRH has two types of members: full members - organisations working in the field of religious heritage; university departments, public authorities; and associate members - individuals, professionals, students and volunteers working in the field of religious heritage.

In order to provide them with the opportunity of getting to know each other, exchange ideas, finding partners for projects and come up with possible collaborations we organise the following activities:

#### FACE TO FACE MEETINGS

These meetings are an opportunity for members to meet, discuss projects and initiatives, and share best practices. They are organised in cooperation with a local member on site and the format includes presentations by local experts and FRH members, a general presentation about FRH, discussion of specific topics and study visits to interesting religious heritage sites accompanied.

These meetings not only allow members to better understand each other's work and contribute to FRH projects, but they also provide FRH with useful insights on how the network can best support its members in their efforts to safeguard religious heritage across Europe.

A physical face-to-face meeting was held in Naumburg, Germany on 4 and 5 December. This meeting was hosted and co-organised by Vereinigten Domstifter zu Merseburg und Naumburg und des Kollegiatstifts Zeitz, the non-profit foundation in charge of the management of Naumburg Cathedral. The face-to-face provided FRH members with a broader view

of the relationship between contemporary art and historic places of worship through a series of presentations on stained glass and contemporary interventions in German churches and cathedrals and two guided visits, the first to Naumburg Cathedral, its museum and archives, and the second to the Pforta Monastery, a former Cistercian monastery that now serves as a boarding school for gifted pupils.

Two other face-to-face meetings took place online: in April from Brussels (Belgium) and in November from Bukovina (Romania).

In April, the online meeting "Pre-conference discussion and policy paper recommendations" was held, which allowed members to share and exchange ideas on the policy recommendations document that FRH developed with input from the network and the conclusions of the 2023 Biennial Conference.

In November, another online face-to-face meeting took place, which introduced participants to the religious heritage landscape of the Bukovina region, in Northeast Romania, and explained the main current plans to preserve and promote it among both locals and visitors. The session was conducted by Carmen Chasovschi, from ADER (Association for Economic and Regional Development), an expert in community-based tourism development with extensive experience in the cultural heritage sector.

## FRH MASTERCLASSES

[www.frh-europe.org/frh-masterclasses](http://www.frh-europe.org/frh-masterclasses)

The FRH Masterclasses aim to improve the capacity of FRH members to address current challenges in the cultural heritage sector with the aid of highly qualified professionals. During the masterclasses, participants have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of innovative methodologies and concepts as well as useful tools to face pressing issues facing religious heritage. This activity is exclusive to members of the FRH network.

### In 2023 we organised two masterclasses:

- **The first masterclass, “Reconstruction of religious buildings in 20th and 21st century Europe: monuments, heritage and identity”** was held in a hybrid format on 25-26 September 2023 in Aachen, Germany. It explored the burning question of why and how to rebuild destroyed religious heritage with leading experts who provided a very valuable context to the debate. Featured speakers included internationally recognised researchers and experts such as Nazar Kozak (Senior researcher, Ethnology Institute, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine/Associate Professor, University of Lviv), or Mathieu Lours (CY Cergy Paris University).
- **The second masterclass, entitled “Understanding, reconnecting and rethinking the soul of religious heritage”** was also held in a hybrid format on 19, 20 & 21 October in Batalha, Portugal, thanks to FRH's partnership with the 4th International Conference Architectures of the Soul.

## FRH TALKS

[www.frh-europe.org/frh-talks](http://www.frh-europe.org/frh-talks)

FRH Talks are a series of virtual chats where we invite the public to meet an expert in the cultural heritage field. The aim is to offer an in-depth view of some of the sector's burning issues and challenges as well as to give participants the floor to ask questions to an expert in the field and exchange views with the rest of the participants. The FRH Talks are open to everybody.

### In 2023 we organised three FRH Talks:

- **The FRH Talk “Young Voices in Religious Heritage”** took place in March and featured three young heritage professionals who presented their research work and initiatives and discussed the sustainability of religious heritage in Europe and the importance of young people's contribution to this specific sector.
- **The FRH Talk “European Year of Skills: The Future of Endangered Heritage Crafts”** took place in May. The session featured Daniel Carpenter and Mary Lewis from the Heritage Crafts Association as guest speakers. It focused on the findings of the UK Red List of Endangered Crafts and reflected on the future of some essential crafts for religious heritage. Their presentation was followed by an introduction to the CRAEFT project by Madina Benvenuti from Mad'in Europe.
- **The FRH Talk “Museums in sacred spaces: keys to success by the Diocesan and Cathedral Museum of Lugo”** took place in December and was conducted by Marcos Gerardo Calles Lombao, director of the Diocesan and Cathedral Museum of Lugo (Spain), who shared with our audience the keys that have led this museum to exponentially increase its visits and connect with the public of the 21st century.

### **12TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The FRH 12th Annual General Meeting was held online on 19 October 2022. The meeting took place with the participation of FRH members and included presentations on the latest activities of the network such as the Europe-wide survey on European citizens' perception of religious heritage, the Run for Heritage campaign, the Religious Heritage Innovator of the Year Award, and the Photo Competition 2023. A financial review of the year was also shared along with the presentation of the strategy of the organisation for the period 2022-2024. At the AGM, two new Council Members were elected, Peter Aiers and Patty Wageman. Sarah de Lencquesaing stepped down as treasurer and board member.

### **ADVOCACY**

FRH participates in several networks and working groups on cultural heritage to make its members' voices heard loud and clear. In that regard, FRH highlights the relevance and richness of Europe's religious heritage, the challenges it is facing, and the best practices and creative innovations that can bring added value to the sector and to decision makers Europe-wide. FRH is a member of the Heritage Alliance 3.3; the European Commission Expert Group on Cultural Heritage; the EU Reflection Group on Cultural Heritage; the Climate Heritage Network; and the New European Bauhaus.

#### **The Heritage Alliance:**

The Heritage Alliance brings together over 130 heritage organisations in a coalition for an independent heritage advocacy movement in the EU. Its activities include consultation, awareness events, advocacy groups, and more. In 2023 FRH Advisory Board President, Lilian Grootswagers, chaired the meetings of the Heritage Alliance.

#### **The European Commission Expert Group on Cultural Heritage:**

The group provides the Commission with advice and expertise, serving as a platform for consultation and exchange of information on cultural heritage policies to support the

implementation of the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage. The Expert Group includes the Commission, Member States and selected stakeholders operating in the area of culture and cultural heritage. The Group focuses on maintaining the spirit of cooperation and policy dialogue achieved during the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

#### **The EU Reflection group for Cultural Heritage:**

The EU Reflection Group for Cultural Heritage is an informal group of experts that are nominated by national heritage authorities. Its aim is to raise awareness on cultural heritage, its value for EU policy development, and its value as a resource for EU policy objectives. Its tasks include collaborating with other heritage organisations and authorities on a European level and to ensure that cultural heritage is considered in EU policymaking.

#### **The Climate Heritage Network:**

The Climate Heritage Network is a community of organisations from the culture field, working together with the goal of tackling climate change and achieving the ambitions of the Paris Climate Agreement. Their tasks include involving heritage in carbon mitigation, helping heritage adapt to the changing climate, planning for loss and damage to cultural heritage, and showcasing the potential of heritage as a tool for addressing these pressing challenges.

#### **New European Bauhaus:**

Launched by the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen in September 2020, the goal of the New European Bauhaus is to bring the European Green Deal closer to citizens and their living spaces by bridging the world of science and technology with the world of art and culture. As an official partner, FRH is committed to ensuring that religious heritage is included as an integral part of the New European Bauhaus and will advocate the need for a heritage-led transformation of our society, economy and environment.

## Projects and activities

### RELIGIANA

[www.frh-europe.org/projects/religiana](http://www.frh-europe.org/projects/religiana)

Religiana is an online platform and key heritage resource giving religious heritage Europe wide visibility, and providing visitors with accurate information on opening hours, contact details, and historical information. The Religiana website also includes thematic lists, which feature key aspects of religious heritage across Europe, showcasing key examples with beautiful photographs and descriptions.

Religiana is developed by FRH in partnership with a growing number of organisations that promote or directly manage religious heritage sites at a local and regional level. This partnership with fourteen geographically diverse organisations allows the promotion of these organisations, which also link their content to Religiana. The platform currently features more than 9,000 heritage sites in 46 countries, and is constantly expanding its coverage, with contributions by partners and the public, who are encouraged to upload information of their favourite religious heritage sites.

### EUROPEAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE DATABASE

In 2023 we embarked on the development of the European Religious Heritage Database, one of our latest ambitious projects, which aims to become the most comprehensive database on religious heritage sites in Europe. A brand identity was created and several existing databases were brought together to launch a pilot website. This database will include sustainability data such as renewable energy usage, biodiversity in land owned by these sites, identification of adaptive reuse and more. This will provide useful information for the European Green Deal strategy and the New European Bauhaus initiative, of which FRH is a proud partner.

### RUN FOR HERITAGE

[www.frh-europe.org/activities/ongoing-activities/run-for-heritage](http://www.frh-europe.org/activities/ongoing-activities/run-for-heritage)

Run for Heritage is an awareness-raising campaign that unites sports and religious heritage, encouraging people, especially the younger generation, to go outside and explore their religious heritage. Participants in the campaign take part in fun activities outdoors - stroll, bike tour, cultural visit - that promote healthy habits while allowing them to learn about the history and cultural richness of their towns and cities. The initiative was launched in 2021 to build on the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

**In 2023 we organised two Run for Heritage activities:** one in Lund (Sweden), and another one in Ilsenburg (Germany).

- The first Run for Heritage took place in Lund, Sweden, in the context of the FRH Biennial Conference 2023. It consisted in a bike orientation activity that took 14 participants to discover four religious sites: the Northern Cemetery (Norra kyrkogården), the Pre-Christian burial mound at the Monument Park (Lerbäckshög), St Peter's Priory (Sankt Peters Klosters kyrka) and the Eastern Cemetery (Ostra kyrkogården). It was organised in collaboration with the Burb project, a local initiative to introduce the younger generations to burial places as living spaces for knowledge, influence; democracy.
- The second Run for Heritage, took place in Ilsenburg, Germany. The Harz Tourist Association developed a religious heritage trail of 3,5 kilometres between the monasteries of Ilsenburg and Drübeck for a group of 40 primary school students from Ilsenburg. The main focus of this Run for Heritage activity was to discover monastic life.





Although it was not an official Run for Heritage activity, in October we supported the decision of the Spanish National Police Corps to celebrate the bicentenary of its creation by walking the Camino Lebaniego, a pilgrimage route that crosses the northern region of Cantabria. A delegation of representatives of the FRH accompanied the participants of the pilgrimage route in Cades, Potes and the Monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana, the ending point of the route.

© image: Kloster Drubeck -  
Run for Heritage - Ilsenburg,  
Germany

**RELIGIOUS HERITAGE INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR**  
[www.frh-europe.org/religious-heritage-innovator-of-the-year](http://www.frh-europe.org/religious-heritage-innovator-of-the-year)

Launched in 2022, the competition aims to spotlight Europe's most innovative practices in religious heritage. The second edition of the Religious Heritage Innovator of the Year Award ran from June to November.

The competition jury was composed of five heritage experts: Anne Grady (Head of Development with the National Museum of Ireland to the CULT Committee of the European Parliament), Gilles Guey (President of the Association of Directors of Culture of French Large Cities and Urban Areas), Justin Kroesen (Professor of Cultural History at the University of Bergen), Greg Pickup (Chief Executive of The Churches Conservation Trust) and Florian Trott (Managing Director of the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe).

The Jury assessed the submissions and selected an overall winner and four finalist projects based on their innovative approach, their contribution to society and the scope of their activity.



The overall winner for 2023 was the Chapter of York, the governing body of York Minster (UK) for the “York Minster Precinct Neighbourhood Plan” project. Through this initiative, York Minster developed an updated master plan to ensure the financial and environmental sustainability of the cathedral and its grounds, as well as the future of the craft skills needed to address its restoration and maintenance, all in a process led by the local community of York.

**The finalist projects selected by the Jury were:**

- “The Triegel-Cranach Altarpiece in Naumburg Cathedral” by Vereinigte Domstifter zu Naumburg und Merseburg und des Kollegiatsifts Zeitz (Germany)
- “International Burial Grounds Survey” by AG Intl Ltd & Church of England (United Kingdom)
- “Jews of Czechia: Yesterday and Today” by Phyllis Zimble Miller & Yael K. Miller (USA)
- “Monasteries: Past, Present and Future” by Patrimonio para Jóvenes (Spain)

© images

Top left: Vereinigte Domstifter (United Cathedrals Foundations), Top right: Miller Mosaic LLC, Bottom left: AG Intl Ltd, Bottom right: Patrimonio para Jóvenes (Heritage for Young People)







© image: Anthony Chappel Ross - Unveiling of the statue of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II by His Majesty King Charles III at York Minster (winner of the 2023 Religious Heritage Innovator of the Year Award)

## PHOTO COMPETITION

[www.frh-europe.org/frh-photo-and-video-competition/winner-and-finalists/](http://www.frh-europe.org/frh-photo-and-video-competition/winner-and-finalists/)

The FRH Photo Competition is an annual contest open to amateurs, professionals and anybody with an interest in photography. The competition has three categories: Artefacts, Religious Buildings, and People and Events. The aim is to showcase the beauty and diversity of Europe's places of worship through its architectural wonders, fascinating artifacts, and unique celebrations.

In 2023 the competition received 2,084 entries from 114 countries in Asia, Africa, North America, South America and Europe. The competition was judged by: José Cobo Calderón (Spanish sculptor), Savina Lambert (French artist and amateur photographer), and Snezana Negovanovic, (Serbian professional photographer working for the Cultural Heritage Preservation Institute of Belgrade).

The selection of the winner and eight finalists was made on the basis of content and aesthetics of the photographs and the creativity and technique demonstrated by the contestants.

**The overall winner of 2023 was Mabel Cedrón - Spain** for her photo of the ceiling of the Sagrada Familia church in Barcelona.

### The finalists were:

#### Category of Artefacts

- Ly Hoang Long - Vietnam
- Andrés Marín - Spain
- Natalia Herzen - Russia

#### Category of People and Events

- Stéphane de Rouville - France
- Mouneb Taim - Syria
- Soufiane Belhani - Algeria

#### Category of Religious Buildings

- Mohammad Amin Abedini - Iran
- Francisco Ortega - Spain

All selected photographs were presented in a booklet available on the FRH website.





© image: Mabel Cedrón (winner of the 2023 Photo Competition)  
- Organic Shapes of the Basílica Sagrada Família - Barcelona, Spain



© image: Àngel van Beek - Saint Antoine de Padoue - Béziers, France

## Our members across Europe

FRH has two types of membership: Full members (organisations that support FRH objectives) and Associate members (individuals). More information: [www.frh-europe.org/get-involved/join-us](http://www.frh-europe.org/get-involved/join-us)



### OUR MEMBERS

**81**   
FULL MEMBERS  
"ORGANISATIONS"

**169**   
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS  
"INDIVIDUALS"

IN  
**45**   
COUNTRIES

**10**   
FULL MEMBERS  
"ORGANISATIONS"

**77**   
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS  
"INDIVIDUALS"

FROM  
**15**   
COUNTRIES

**JOINED THE FRH NETWORK IN 2023**

## Our 2023 in numbers

**11**  
EVENTS



**5** ONLINE



**6** IN-PERSON

**+ 100**



PARTICIPANTS IN THE  
RUN FOR HERITAGE C



**3** FRH TALKS



**2** MASTERCLASSES



**3** FACE-TO-FACE



**2** RUN FOR HERITAGE



**1** CONFERENCE



**31.9**  
WEBSITE

**114.804**

VISITORS ON THE  
RELIGIANA WEBSITE

**+ 600**



PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH FRH EVENTS



**3.600**

 <p><b>AMPAIGN</b></p>	<p>CONTRIBUTION TO EUROPEAN-FUNDED PROJECTS:</p> <p><b>2</b> BE CULTOUR AND CHARTER PROJECT</p>	 <p><b>+1.800</b> NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS</p>
<p><b>980</b> VISITORS</p>	 <p><b>SIGNATORIES</b> OF THE SKILLS ALLIANCE</p>	<p><b>2</b> DIGITAL PUBLICATIONS</p> <p>RELIGIOUS HERITAGE INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR BOOKLET AND PHOTO COMPETITION BOOKLET</p> 
	<p><b>2.084</b> PHOTOS</p> 	<p>FROM <b>114</b> COUNTRIES</p> 
<p><b>VIEWS ON YOUTUBE</b></p>	<p>PARTNER IN <b>1</b> NEW EUROPEAN PROJECT: <b>MIRETAGE</b></p> 	



© image: Dimitrios Sarantopoulos  
- Holy Creation - Greece



## Contribution to the European Year of Skills

In the European Year of Skills, FRH has directed its efforts to raise awareness of the importance of craft skills, an issue of utmost importance that we believe should be given more attention in national and European education policies.

Keeping our religious heritage in good condition requires skilled craftspeople with the knowledge and experience to undertake restoration and conservation tasks. They are guardians of knowledge, who keep alive old techniques involved in sculpture, painting, metalworking, glassmaking, and many other craftsmanship fields. We must not think though that heritage craftsmanship is anchored in the past. It continuously adapts to changing technologies, labour demands and social circumstances. It is very important to protect the link between past and present by ensuring the survival of heritage crafts. Without a plan to successfully protect this know-how and pass it on to new generations, some heritage crafts are quietly dying out.

In an effort to find solutions to the uncertain future of heritage crafts, we undertook a series of actions that we considered necessary to put this issue on the agenda of the European Year of Skills.

- **Start of a Mad'in Europe collaboration.** We decided to join forces and expertise for a common goal: drawing attention to the urgent need for a plan for ensuring the future of heritage crafts.
- **Series of interviews with craftspeople.** Throughout the year we interviewed together with Mad'in Europe 14 craftspeople about the threats and future perspectives of their crafts. Their interviews were published on the FRH website and newsletter.
- **Webinar on the future of heritage crafts.** In May we hosted a webinar featuring the Heritage Crafts Association, a UK based organization that every two years publishes a list of endangered crafts in this country. They are hoping to make this Europe-wide
- **Upcoming policy recommendations.** All the actions taken throughout the year will be used in the elaboration of policy recommendations to ensure that crafts are taken into account and protected in education and cultural policies of European countries.





© image: David Cimpan  
- The silence of ruin -Vermeș Bistrița-Năsăud, Romania

# 10 Key findings of religious heritage

The following key findings and recommendations were compiled based on the FRH 2023 Biennial Conference “European Sustainable Religious Heritage” held in Lund, Sweden on 20-21 April 2023.

## ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

- Economic challenges regarding the **maintenance, restoration and use of religious heritage sites** should be addressed by focusing on education and community engagement.
- Ensuring the continuity of **traditional craft skills** necessary for the maintenance and restoration of cultural heritage is paramount, as is the transmission of knowledge and access to cultural heritage activities and sites.

## ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY

- All cultural heritage actions should incorporate **international standards and norms** regarding environmental sustainability.
- Integrate cultural heritage into **environmental sustainability policy**. We need monitoring and emergency risk management, to anticipate and be prepared for critical challenges and risk management.
- Efforts should be made to transition to a **more sustainable cultural tourism framework**, encouraging sustainable transportation, universal accessibility and avoiding over-tourism of cultural heritage sites to ensure the preservation of sites.

## SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- A **wide range of stakeholders** should be involved in any identification, planning, and implementation of solutions to safeguard religious heritage.
- A **top-down and bottom-up** approach needs to be complemented with the participation of diverse organisations, individuals, and policymakers, to include varied perspectives, and creative solutions and to raise awareness in multiple forums at all levels.

## CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SUSTAINABILITY

- A real future of religious heritage needs respectful and open-minded people, based on **European values and human rights**.
- All actions should be based on **respect for diversity**, fostering **intercultural and interreligious dialogue**, and ensuring that all participating organisations and individuals are included, and their views are given relevance.
- The sustainable future of intangible religious heritage is intertwined with tangible heritage: **songs, art, music, and narratives are all part of Religious Heritage**.



© image: Mikhail Kapychka  
- Young bell ringer - Pskov, Russia

## The Friends of FRH

The Friends of FRH is an independent association set up by la Fondation Roi Baudouin. Its aims are to promote a better understanding of the sector's needs and advocate positive change, promote FRH as the European federation of like-minded organisations, provide a source of volunteer support and introduce FRH to major donors.

Friends are invited to join FRH events and participate in activities to meet each other, explore the different issues facing the sector, enjoy examples of Europe's glorious religious heritage and learn about FRH's projects and initiatives.

Friends of FRH welcomes anyone who wishes to support Europe's religious heritage. Join Friends of FRH now: [www.frh-europe.org/get-involved/joinus/friends-of-frh](http://www.frh-europe.org/get-involved/joinus/friends-of-frh)

For further information on the Friends please contact FRH's office: [info@frh-europe.org](mailto:info@frh-europe.org)

### DONATIONS TO FRH

Europe's sacred heritage - architectural, movable and intangible - is central to its cultural and aesthetic roots. In a constantly evolving society, religious buildings are unique repositories of art and history, a resource for sustainable development and quality of life and tools for urban regeneration.

By donating you are contributing to the safeguarding and preservation of this significant part of our society.

### HOW TO MAKE A DONATION

By regular bank transfer to:

IBAN: BE35 0019 2887 7837

BIC: GEBABEBB

For tax certificates please contact the FRH office.



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- From the Notre Dame collections - Strasbourg, France

## Statutory Information

### COUNCIL 2023-2024



**President - Pilar Bahamonde**, Spanish, Director of Liébana Centre for Studies, and Infantado Tower Museum, Potes, Spain.



**Treasurer - Peter Aiers**, British. 34th Master and Chief Executive of the Charterhouse. Former Chief Executive of the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT).



**Secretary - Stefan Beier**, German, Chair of the Board of KLOSTERLAND, an association of monasteries in Germany and Poland. Director of Museum im Zisterzienserkloster Lehnin (Museum in the former Cistercian Monastery of Lehnin).



**Justin Kroesen**, Dutch, Professor of the Material Culture of Christianity at the University of Bergen (Norway), and curator of the church art collection at its University Museum.



**Henrik Lindblad**, Swedish, One of the founding members of FRH and co-founder of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee PRERICO (Places of Religion and Ritual).



**Wenceslas de Lobkowicz**, French / Czech, Ambassador for the Order of the Knights of Malta to the Czech Republic. Vice-President of the European Historic Houses Association. Former EU lawyer.



**Andrea Longhi**, Italian, Associate Professor in the History of Architecture at the Politecnico di Torino.



**Michael Mail**, Scottish, Founder & Chief Executive, Foundation for Jewish Heritage.



**Mara Popescu**, Romanian, Expert in Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development.



**Chiara Curti**, Italian, Doctor in Art History, teaching at the Antoni Gaudi Faculty at the Ateneu Sant Pacia. Director of the Barcelona Office of the Eugenia Balcells Foundation.



**Sofia M. Vollmer**, French/Venezuelan, Director of Business Development for a Belgian Company that provides digital tools to family offices, businesses, boards and councils worldwide.



**Lacramioara Beilic**, Romanian, Executive Director of the Bucovina Tourism Association



**Patty Wageman**, Dutch. Director of the Groningen Historic Churches Foundation (Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken). Former director of Museum De Buitenplaats Eelde.



© image: Ter Brake A.B.  
- Mosque Utrecht - The Netherlands



## Governance

### COUNCIL

The Council, elected by its members, is responsible for FRH's governance. Council members also play a role as ambassadors for the association. FRH seeks to combine within its Council good knowledge of the sector, competency in ensuring top quality governance and specific skills such as the supervision of complex cross-border projects. It aims to include a good spread of nationality.

### FRH ADVISORY BOARD

The members of the Advisory Board are previous Council members who advise the current Council.

**Lilian Grootswagers-Theuns** - President of the Advisory Board. Owner of Erfgoed.nu, a Dutch Heritage Institute, and Vice-President of the Task Force Toekomst Kerkgebouwen.

**Thomas Coomans de Brachène** - Belgian, professor at the KU Leuven, representative of the Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation. Founder member of FRH.

**Graham Bell** - Director of the UK-based NGO Cultura Trust and the Hungarian Renaissance Foundation. Founder member of FRH.

### INTERNAL RULES

The statutes and internal rules are available on the website: [www.frh-europe.org/about-frh/organization/documents](http://www.frh-europe.org/about-frh/organization/documents)

### REGISTERED OFFICE

67 Rue de Trèves, 1040 Bruxelles, Belgium.  
FRH currently employs two full-time staff.

### LEGAL IDENTITY

FRH was registered as an ASBL (Association Sans But Lucratif – a non-profit organisation) in Belgium on 29th September 2011 under number 839745430.

### COMMITTEES

Members are encouraged to participate actively in Committees, who provide recommendations and guidance on FRH's activities and strategy. The full committee organigram is available on the FRH website: [www.frh-europe.org/about-frh/organization/committees](http://www.frh-europe.org/about-frh/organization/committees)

#### The Committees include:

**The Executive Committee** - composed of three Council members, it supports the FRH office, oversees day to day implementation of Council policies, and provides organisational direction for FRH's Executive Officer.

**The Communication Committee** - provides recommendations and supports the FRH office with external communications.

**The Finance Committee** - supervises FRH's finances with the help of an external accountant and ensures that FRH fulfils its statutory financial obligations.

**The Membership Committee** - helps FRH develop a coherent membership strategy.

**The Governance and Nominations Committee** - sets the structures under which FRH operates, manages the nomination process to committees and to the Council.

**The Scientific Committee** - provides scientific expertise and guidance to FRH.

**The Strategic Planning Committee** - sets the general FRH strategy for the upcoming years.


**The Conference Subcommittee** - sets the academic perspectives for the FRH Biennial Conference.



© image: Teodora Koleva  
- The Icon - Thessaloniki, Greece

## Accounts

	12/2021	12/2022	12/2023
<b>Income</b>			
Membership fees	15 075	13 100	15 325
Conferences fees	0	0	21 617
Donors	6 891	20 862	800
EU funding	167 102	132 000	210 311
Others	0	492	657
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>189 068</b>	<b>166 454</b>	<b>248 710</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Rent & offices costs	-14 889	-11 393	-10 358
Salaries & partena	-109 138	-104 025	-115 238
IT	-21 571	-16 449	-42 127
Insurance	-195	0	-203
Accounting	-36 299	-28 767	-37 504
Travel & events	-4 626	-7 104	-43 191
Finance costs	-949	1 380	1 467
Other	-1 199	0	-1 515
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>-188 866</b>	<b>-166 359</b>	<b>-248 669</b>
<b>RESULT</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>41</b>
	12/2021	12/2022	12/2023
<b>Assets</b>			
Members	62 253	2 492	0
Assets	0	0	1 113
Bank Balances	213 138	119 537	106 604
Accruals FRB	4 800	4 800	4 800
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>280 191</b>	<b>126 829</b>	<b>112 517</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Creditors	18 2128	17 554	23 260
Grants received in advance	218 950	66 150	46 092
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>-237 162</b>	<b>-83 704</b>	<b>-69 352</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>-43 028</b>	<b>-43 126</b>	<b>-43 165</b>



“Religious heritage is the biggest museum of Europe, and its buildings are markers of it connected by routes and paths and lanes which were the highways of their time. Cathedrals, synagogues, mosques, chapels, and hermitages are real palimpsests. They hold layers upon layers of history and art.”

Pilar G. Bahamonde, FRH President

**Future for Religious Heritage**

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Registered Charity (ASBL Belgium)

No. 839 745 430

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© image: Jack Wilson - The interiors of Religious buildings - Turin, Italy

[www.frh-europe.org](http://www.frh-europe.org)