

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

# **Heritage, Care, and People in a Resilient World: Heritage Networks as a Strategy for Sustainability**

May 27–29, 2026 – Madrid

The International Congress on Heritage, Care, and People in a Resilient World: Heritage Networks as a Strategy for Sustainability is organized by the Research Group on Cultural Heritage Management of the Complutense University of Madrid. It will take place in Madrid from May 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, and aims at fostering constructive critical debate on the role of networks in heritage, as well as their importance for the sustainability of cultural and natural assets.

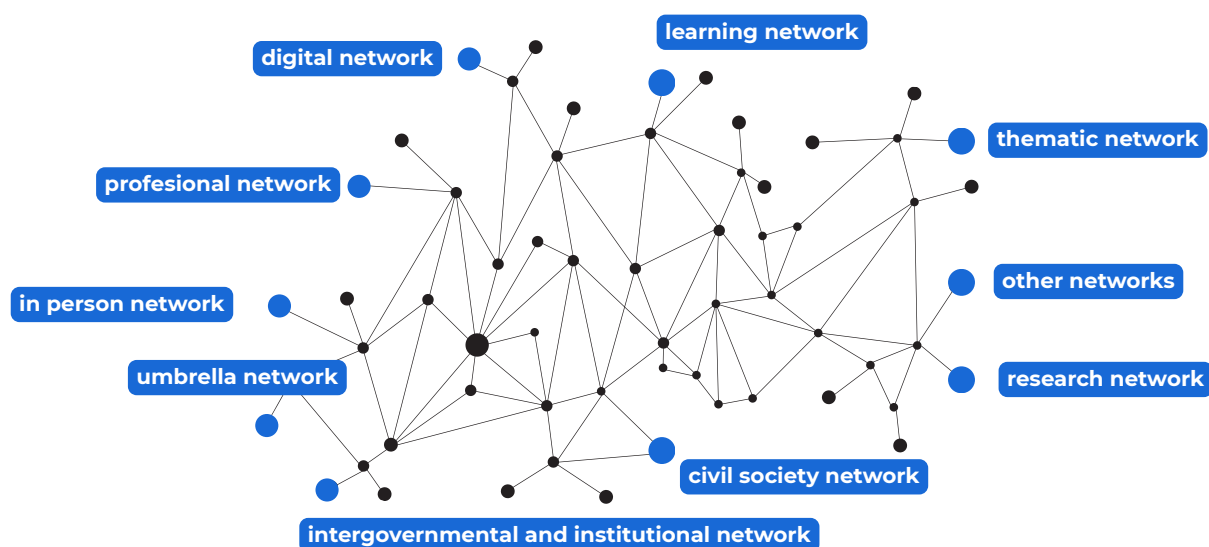
Networks, whether professional, linked to sites, museums, landscapes, or natural parks, or stemming from local associations, heritage-bearing communities, or even those virtually generated by visitors and tourists, facilitate disseminating processes and good practices in heritage management. Also help in securing resources and act as spaces for encounter and collaboration. However, this swarm of interconnections cannot remain exempt from critical, transdisciplinary analysis and reflection grounded in complex thinking.

The goal of this conference is to collectively reflect on the benefits, challenges, and tensions inherent in building alliances, associations, and connections among interested communities, whether for one-time initiatives or for medium- and long-term projects. Despite power imbalances that may emerge within networks, it remains essential to encourage creating bonds, knowledge exchange, and the collective construction and stewardship of heritage.

For these reasons, this conference aims to become a space for critical reflection on heritage networks akin to an innovation laboratory that both inspires and invites the creation of new actions, while also encouraging the questioning of established practices that may have had negative impacts on heritage communities, their assets, and values. Drawing on the image of a neural network capable of generating multiple synapses, this gathering seeks to foster meaningful connections among participants by promoting dialogue, mutual learning, the improvement of heritage practices, and the creation of new spaces of care. All of this arises from a broad and integrated vision of heritage, enabling us to engage with the complexity and diversity of the vast universe it represents today.

From a people-centred approach, this congress invites those who work with, research, or participate in heritage networks, or are simply interested in them, to join and contribute actively.

Which of these networks does yours fit into?



Tell us about your network whether it fits into one of these types or represents a new kind worth highlighting. Let us know: What do you value the most about belonging to these networks? What has been your best experience within a heritage network? What do you think is the greatest challenge for networks today? Does networking facilitate heritage management? What good practices have emerged thanks to these networks? How has heritage practice evolved through networking? Is network-based work truly sustainable? Are networks merely instrumental, or do they also generate content and values that enrich both participants and heritage management? What examples or models of heritage-based networks can we point to?

Based on the proposals received, the final programme will be designed to promote joint reflection and collaborative work among participants. For now we have identified the following topics:

- **Theoretical and Critical-Constructive Approach**

It includes all proposals with a primarily theoretical focus on the characteristics, challenges and opportunities of heritage networks.

- **Case Studies or Practices**

It includes papers addressing practical topics such as methodologies, case studies, experiences, types of networks, associations, and instrumental uses of networks, among others.

- **Mixed Approach**

Includes proposals that combine both theoretical and practical perspectives on heritage networks.

- **Other Approaches**

If your proposal does not fit within any of the categories above—surprise us!

Based on the proposals, a session will be designed to promote joint reflection and collaborative work among participants.

**We look forward to seeing you!**

## ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Director: Alicia R. Castillo Mena. Members of the Cultural Heritage Management Research Group (UCM): Luis Benítez de Lugo Enrich, Gemma Muñoz García, Raquel Caerols Mateo, Eloísa Pérez Santos, Esther Jiménez Pablo, Arturo Ruiz Taboada. And members of the CIPAMUR Project Team: Arnulfo Allende Carrera, Nektbet Corpas Cívicos, Sonia Menéndez, Eric Chiquito, María Mestre, Gloria Pérez, Ana Pastor Pérez, M<sup>a</sup> Ángeles Querol Fernández, Citlalli Reynoso Ramos, Beatriz A. Rodríguez, Francisco Vélez, Gemma Muñoz, and Constanza B. Segovia Quinteros.

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

In addition to the work of the GPC-UCM, a scientific committee is being formed with national and international experts, whose members will be announced at the beginning of autumn 2025.

### (1) CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH GROUP – COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID

For over fifteen years, this transdisciplinary research group has developed numerous projects focused on the social dimension of world heritage. Its work is grounded in the principles of citizen science and in close collaboration with public administrations linked to culture and science. One of the group's main lines of action is the creation of spaces for building collective knowledge, in which the scientific-technical approach acts as a mediator for the inclusion of diverse forms of knowledge contributed by various actors involved in heritage management.

This methodology fosters processes of listening, consensus, and participation that help transcend academic and institutional comfort zones, generating a positive impact both on research outcomes and on the sustainable management of heritage assets. In its most recent project, funded by Spain's National R&D Plan of the Ministry of Science, the group reaffirms its commitment to strengthening networks among communities connected to heritage, promoting citizen participation as a foundation for social innovation in this field.

## CONTACT

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