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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council on 19 and 20 November 2026: European Heritage Heads Forum 20th Annual Meeting, post-earthquake recovery of Croatia and data collection for risk management of cultural heritage *- Information from Croatia*

In October, the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Media hosted the 20th Annual Meeting of the European Heritage Heads Forum, on the topic of *Cultural Heritage Resilience in the Face of Contemporary Challenges*. The EHHF was founded in 2005 as an informal, professional and expert network of national heritage heads, comprising not only the European Union member states, but also those of the European Economic Area and the Council of Europe, providing a platform for frank exchange of information and experience. The EHHF Secretariat is based in Brussels, hosted by Urban Brussels.

Croatia would like to underscore the importance of active participation in international fora of this kind and the opportunity to share its experience with the peers in the field of cultural heritage protection. Furthermore, the year 2026 marked the formal completion of a comprehensive reconstruction project in nine Croatian counties following the devastating earthquakes in 2020.

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The Ministry of Culture and Media of Croatia steered the financing of more than 500 cultural heritage buildings and movable cultural goods in the total amount of 1,7 billion euros. Urgent measures and structural renovation projects were financed by the European Solidarity Fund totalling 487 million euros, while comprehensive recovery was financed through the Recovery and Resilience Plan and the State Budget – meaning we were able to combine necessary funds/financial resources. Equipping the biggest national cultural institutions will be financed through the MFF.

The methodology applied was based on our experience gained during the earthquake in Dubrovnik in 1979, as well as the Homeland War 1991-1995 and the widespread destruction of cultural heritage that we have endured. We have finetuned data collection, documenting and recording procedures, and these have provided invaluable not only for us, but also for Ukraine that has reached out to us in the first hours following the beginning of the Russian aggression. We have also used 3D scanning extensively, which helped us prove progressive damage and pull additional funds for urgent stabilising of damaged buildings.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that the Zagreb cathedral has been undergoing renovation since 2020 and it is joined only by the Notre-Dame de Paris when it comes to current major post-disaster reconstruction efforts in Europe. In this case, we have initiated an exchange between the Croatian and French engineers and cultural heritage experts, and we look forward to continuing this exchange in the next year. Moreover, prof. Damir Lazarević and his team from the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the University of Zagreb took the 1st place in the ITASCA Software 3DEC Day 2025 Modelling Contest with their discrete element model of the Zagreb Cathedral and was singled out as an excellent example of how advanced numerical modelling can support informed decisions for the seismic evaluation and strengthening of the cathedral.

The methodology we have developed and funding we have secured – the latter relating to the European Solidarity Fund, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the State Budget – give us a wealth of contemporary know-how that we can pass on to other countries for we live in an era of global tensions, unpredictability and climate change.

Croatia remains committed to strengthening European cooperation and sharing its expertise to ensure the long-term protection, preservation and resilience of our common European cultural heritage for future generations.

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