



GERACE

PORTA DEL SOLE



GERACE
NORMAN DREAM



22-26 JUNE 2026

GERACE HERITAGE LAB

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC VILLAGES

**UNESCO CONVENTIONS AND COUNCIL OF EUROPE
PROGRAMMES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

SALA DELL'ARAZZO MUSEO DIOCESANO CITTADELLA VESCOVILE DI GERACE

A residential study week dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of the cultural heritage of Gerace and its surrounding territory, also supporting a potential UNESCO World Heritage nomination process

From 22 to 26 June, in the historic centre of Gerace, a Greco-Byzantine medieval town overlooking the Costa dei Gelsomini in Calabria, the “Gerace Heritage Lab” will take place. Organised by the Municipality of Gerace, this international event is conceived as an intensive week of study, dialogue and research. The meetings will focus on the protection, management, enhancement and transmission of the cultural heritage of historic villages to younger generations, in dialogue with UNESCO Conventions and Council of Europe programmes, also with a view to a potential UNESCO nomination process involving the Greco-Byzantine heritage of Calabria, of which Gerace is one of the most significant expressions.

The initiative was conceived with the aim of transforming the Calabrian town into a temporary laboratory of advanced cultural training, bringing together UNESCO experts, specialists in European cultural programmes, heritage professionals, scholars, academics, public administrators and local communities in an immersive and interdisciplinary learning environment. For one week, Gerace will become a space for the exchange of knowledge and best practices in heritage management and safeguarding, where cultural heritage will be explored not only as a historical and identity-defining asset, but also as a strategic driver for the sustainable development of small inland communities.

The programme of thematic sessions aims to explore the impact and potential of some of the most influential UNESCO instruments, including the 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, as well as the Council of Europe Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society and the Council of Europe Cultural Routes Programme.

The overall strategy seeks to enhance the historical, artistic and landscape heritage of Gerace and its surrounding territory while fostering dialogue with national and international experiences. Through a network-based and multidisciplinary approach, the initiative will connect heritage conservation and safeguarding with sustainable tourism, local development, community participation and cultural innovation. The seminar activities will combine working groups and workshops, study visits, operational discussions and dissemination activities, with the active bottom-up involvement of stakeholders. This approach will encourage cooperation and synergies among experts, academic researchers, institutions and local communities. Particular attention will be devoted to analysing management and enhancement models developed in areas facing depopulation and socio-economic fragility, with the aim of contributing to the creation of a shared platform for the permanent exchange of experiences, methodologies and best practices. The study week, combining a scientific approach with a cultural programme dedicated to the promotion and understanding of the territory, aims to produce a final position paper identifying common principles and guidelines for a future feasibility plan. This will contribute to a broader territorial development strategy that may include a UNESCO nomination process and, in the context of cultural proximity policies, the sharing of strategies for the protection, safeguarding, promotion and enhancement of cultural heritage.

The nine thematic sessions will focus on:

- The 1972 and 2003 UNESCO Conventions for the protection, safeguarding, promotion and enhancement of cultural heritage and for the sustainable development of territories: criteria and pathways.
- The Italy of historic villages and inland areas: Gerace, Porta del Sole, and its cultural, historical, artistic and environmental heritage.
- Governance models for sustainable territorial development, from policies supporting the regeneration of historic villages to management and safeguarding plans for tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- The role of local communities in the protection, safeguarding and enhancement of cultural heritage and their cooperation with institutions. Social participation and UNESCO Heritage governance in dialogue with the principles of the Council of Europe Faro Convention.
- Heritage vs Tourism? World Heritage, cultural enterprises and sustainable tourism.
- Heritage networks: cultural routes for the development of communities and territories.
- Italian UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in network: the roots of the future. Communities, institutions and best practices.
- Closing session and synthesis of the panel discussions, including the presentation of the key principles of the “Gerace Charter for the Sustainable Development of Historic Villages”.

Patrizia Nardi
Scientific Director Gerace Heritage Lab 2026

09:30

Opening Session

Rudi Lizzi - Mayor of Gerace

Giovanni Calabrese - Regional Minister for Tourism of the Calabria Region

Eulalia Micheli - Regional Minister for Education of the Calabria Region

Antonella Sberna - Vice-President of the European Parliament

Carlo Marcotulli - Counsellor of Legation, Deputy Head of Office XIII, Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion (DGCE) – UNESCO and Archaeological Missions, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy

Renato Carullo - Commissioner of the Aspromonte UNESCO Global Geopark Authority

Vincenzo Santoro - Head of Culture and Tourism, ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) – General Director of AICOTUR

Giuseppe Bombino - Member of the National Technical Commission for the PNRR-PNIEC of the Ministry of Environment and Energy Security and President of the Grecanica Area Local Action Group (GAL)

11:00

Presentation of Gerace Heritage Lab 2026

Patrizia Nardi - International UNESCO Heritage Expert, Scientific Director of the Project

11:30

Thematic Session 1

The 1972 and 2003 UNESCO Conventions for the Protection, Safeguarding, Promotion and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage and for the Sustainable Development of Territories. Criteria and Pathways.

Objective

To promote awareness of the principles and contents of the UNESCO Conventions and to facilitate the exchange of know-how and best practices in the development of UNESCO nomination processes.

Chairs

Giorgio Andrian - Geographer, International UNESCO Heritage Expert

Keynote Speakers

Patrizia Nardi - Historian, Expert on the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Francisco Javier López Morales - Former Director of UNESCO World Heritage for the United Mexican States and contributor to the drafting of the 1972 UNESCO Convention and the 2003 UNESCO Convention

Leandro Ventura - Director of the Central Institute for Intangible Heritage, Ministry of Culture

Bienvenido Maquedano Carrasco - Coordinator of the UNESCO nomination "Traditional Talavera Craftsmanship Processes of Puebla and Tlaxcala (Mexico) and the Ceramics of Talavera de la Reina and El Puente del Arzobispo"

Marcelino Sánchez Ruiz - Former Director General for Cultural Heritage of the Regional Government of Andalusia, responsible for the UNESCO nominations of the Andalusian cities of Úbeda and Baeza and the Olive Landscapes of Andalusia. Expert in the protection and development of small historic towns.

Discussion

14:30

Thematic Session 2

The Italy of Historic Villages and Inland Areas: Gerace, Porta del Sole, and its Cultural, Historical, Artistic and Environmental Heritage.

Objective

To reflect on Gerace - one of "The Most Beautiful Villages in Italy" - from a future-oriented perspective, drawing upon the roots of its distinguished past.

Chairs

Claudio Bocci - Former Director General of Federculture

Marisa Larosa - Councillor for Culture, Municipality of Gerace

Keynote Speakers

Giacomo Oliva - Historian and expert in cultural heritage enhancement. Director of the Diocesan Museum and the Treasury Museum of Gerace Cathedral

Giuseppe Mantella - Director of the Cultural Heritage Office and the Episcopal Citadel of the Diocese of Locri-Gerace

Daniele Castrizio - Professor at the University of Messina and Director of the "Gerhard Rohlfs" Civic Museum of the Greco-Calabrian Language

Francesco Spanò - Promoter of the UNESCO Tentative List nomination under the 1972 Convention for "The Evidence of Italo-Greek Culture between the Early and Late Middle Ages"

Giovanni Soda - Director of the Culture and Heritage Enhancement Department of the Municipality of Corigliano-Rossano

Roberto Quatraccioli - Head of the Community Marketing Action within the PNRR project "Gerace Porta del Sole – Gerace Cultural Destination". Consultant in place marketing, community marketing and destination management for public authorities, local communities and tourism destinations.

Francesco Vigliarolo - Professor and UNESCO Chair Holder in "Economic Systems and Human Rights" at the National University of La Plata

Discussion

18:00

Study Visit

Cultural Heritage and Identity

Guided tour of the medieval historic centre and Gerace Cathedral

10:00

Thematic Session 3

Governance Models for the Sustainable Development of Territories. From Policies Supporting the Regeneration of Historic Villages to the Structure of Management and Safeguarding Plans for Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Objective

To identify guidelines for an integrated management plan through the analysis of tools, methodologies and case studies.

Chairs

Paolo Patanè - Representative of the World Heritage Centre for the site "Late Baroque Towns of the Val di Noto" and Director of the Coordination of UNESCO Municipalities of Sicily.

Keynote Speakers

Carmelo Lentino - Chief of Staff to the Undersecretary of State for Economy and Finance, Ministry of Economy and Finance

Luis Pablo Martínez Sanmartín - International expert in UNESCO nominations and coordinator of the UNESCO inscriptions of the Palm Grove of Elche, the Mystery Play of Elche (Misteri d'Elx), the Water Tribunal of the Vega of Valencia, and the Educational Project of the Traditional Culture Centre – Pusol School Museum

Giorgio Andrian - Expert on the 1972 UNESCO Convention and coordinator of the UNESCO nomination "Padova Urbs Picta. The Fourteenth-Century Fresco Cycles of Padua"

Adriana Miotto - Destination management expert, CEO and Co-Founder of Just Good Tourism.

Xavier Castro Pérez - Academic at the University of Santiago de Compostela and expert on the UNESCO World Heritage Camino de Santiago

Alberto Ziparo - Urban planner at the University of Florence and member of the Sustainable Strait Territory Network

Discussion

14:30

Thematic Session 4

The Role of Local Communities in the Protection, Safeguarding and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage and their Synergy with Institutional Stakeholders. Social Participation and Governance of UNESCO Heritage in Dialogue with the Principles of the Council of Europe Faro Convention

Objective

To define the role, scope and capacity of communities in cultural heritage protection and safeguarding processes; to identify best practices in community–institution relationships; and to present case studies of public-private cooperation.

Chairs

Patrizia Nardi - International UNESCO Heritage Expert.

Paolo Patanè - Director of the Coordination of UNESCO Municipalities of Sicily

Keynote Speakers

Marcelino Sánchez Ruiz - Former Director General for Cultural Heritage of the Regional Government of Andalusia, responsible for the UNESCO nominations of the Andalusian cities of Úbeda and Baeza and the Olive Landscapes of Andalusia. Expert in the protection and development of small historic towns

Stefania Baldinotti - Anthropologist and expert in bottom-up community engagement processes. Head of the Visual Anthropology Archive and Audiovisual Laboratory of the Central Institute for Intangible Heritage (ICPI), Ministry of Culture

Francesco Calzolaio - Coordinator of the Faro Italia Platform for the Council of Europe

Luisa Vietri - Ethno-anthropologist and expert in the cataloguing of tangible and intangible demo-ethno-anthropological heritage

Valentina Zingari - Scientific Coordinator of "Tocati – A Shared Programme for the Safeguarding of Traditional Games and Sports", included in the UNESCO 2003 Convention Register of Good Safeguarding Practices

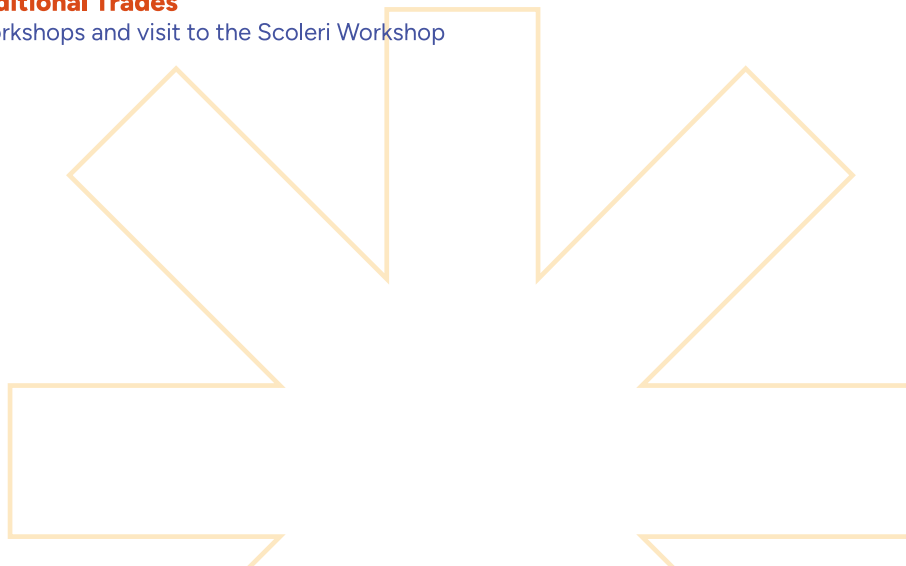
Discussion

18:00

Study Visit

Craftsmanship and Traditional Trades

Tour of Gerace's artisan workshops and visit to the Scoleri Workshop



Wednesday

24

June

10:00

Thematic Session 5

Heritage vs Tourism? World Heritage, Cultural Enterprises and Sustainable Tourism

Objective

To identify models of responsible tourism, management tools and tourism sustainability strategies for tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Chairs

Francesco Vigliarolo - Professor and UNESCO Chair Holder in "Economic Systems and Human Rights" at the National University of La Plata

Claudio Bocci - Former Director General of Federculture

Keynote Speakers

Carmen de Jesus Geraldo Carvalheira - Councillor for Cultural Affairs of the Municipality of Évora, Portuguese UNESCO World Heritage City and European Capital of Culture 2027

Miguel Correia dos Reis Pedro - Head of Culture and Heritage of the Municipality of Évora

Fabrizio Sudano - Director of the National Archaeological Museum of Reggio Calabria

Peppino De Rose - Economist at the University of Calabria and the University of Salento, expert in cohesion policies and European Union programmes. Presidency of the Council of Ministers – NUPC DPCoe

Maurizio Lovecchio - Member of the EURISPES Scientific Committee and Project Manager in the field of R&D funding and business innovation

Sabrina Scalea - Manager of the Aspromonte UNESCO Global Geopark Authority.

Sonia Anelli - Director of the Belluno Dolomites National Park

Rocco Gangemi - Former Regional Representative of the Italian Environment Fund (FAI) for Calabria, Environment and Landscape Section. Member of GEA – Aspromonte Hiking Group for the "Brigand's Trail" project

Vincenzo Scordo - Founder of Visit Mediterraneo and Business Manager of Visit Italy.

Discussion

11:30

Technical Workshop

"Destination Calabria – Product Design and Tourism Itineraries".

led by

Roberto Quatracci - Head of the Community Marketing Action within the PNRR project Gerace Porta del Sole – Gerace Cultural Destination. Consultant in place marketing, community marketing and destination management for public authorities, local communities and tourism destinations.

17:00

Study Visit

Nature and Art

- Aspromonte Safari: UNESCO Global Geopark
- Guided tour of the medieval historic centre and Gerace Cathedral



10:00

Thematic Session 6

Heritage Networks: Cultural Routes for the Development of Communities and Territories.

Objective

To identify a development model based on a shared cultural element connecting multiple territories and providing the foundation for development that respects places and communities. The session will explore the UNESCO World Heritage Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, stretching from Mexico to the United States; the Camino de Santiago de Compostela and its history, culinary traditions and pilgrims' wine culture; the Via Francigena, linking Italy with north-western Europe and currently under consideration for UNESCO World Heritage status; the Iter Vitis Cultural Route, a Council of Europe cultural route connecting vineyards, villages, historic towns and wine-producing communities; the Orange Flags programme of the Touring Club Italiano; and the Nilian Route.

Chairs

Patrizia Nardi - International UNESCO Heritage Expert and Scientific Director of the Project

Claudio Bocci - Former Director General of Federculture

Keynote Speakers

Francisco Javier López Morales - Strategic Coordinator of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro UNESCO nomination

Xavier Castro Pérez - Expert on the UNESCO World Heritage Camino de Santiago and on intangible cultural heritage associated with pilgrimage routes

Luca Bruschi - Expert in cultural heritage enhancement and sustainable tourism. Director of the European Association of the Via Francigena Ways.

Emanuela Panke - Expert in agri-food marketing, rural tourism and wine tourism. President of Iter Vitis – Les Chemins de la Vigne en Europe, Council of Europe Cultural Route

Domenico Cappellano - Regional Consul for Calabria of the Touring Club Italiano

Lorenzo Bongiolami - Operational Director of the San Nilo Route (Nilian Route) Project

Giovanni Russo - Expert in the History of Italo-Greek Monasticism

Alessandra Mazzei e Mariella Arcuri - Rossano Purpurea Association

Focus Session

Guimarães, UNESCO World Heritage City (Portugal)

Ricardo Araújo - Mayor

Isabel Ferreira - Councillor for Culture and Tourism

Ricardo José Fernandes Rodrigues - Technical Expert, Municipality of Guimarães

Focus Session

Barcelos, UNESCO Creative City for Crafts and Folk Art

Paulo Cesar Azevedo de Faria - Managing Partner of Rittma. UNESCO Recognition as a Driver of Endogenous Territorial Development: The Barcelos Case Study

Discussion

14:30

Thematic Session 7

Italian UNESCO Intangible Heritage: The Roots of the Future. Communities, Institutions and Best Practices.

Objective

To highlight the role of communities in ensuring the vitality of intangible cultural heritage; to examine documentation and inventorying methodologies; to identify dynamics of shared safeguarding between communities and local administrations; and to underline the role of the Central Institute for Intangible Heritage (ICPI) in the promotion and enhancement of Italian UNESCO intangible cultural heritage.

Chairs

Stefania Baldinotti - Anthropologist and expert in bottom-up community engagement processes. Head of the Visual Anthropology Archive and Audiovisual Laboratory of the Central Institute for Intangible Heritage (ICPI), Ministry of Culture

Patrizia Nardi - International UNESCO Heritage Expert and Scientific Director of the Project

Keynote Speakers

Antonella Brancadoro - Scientific Coordinator of the UNESCO element "Truffle Hunting and Extraction"

Giorgio Marinello - Scientific Coordinator of the UNESCO element "The Musical Art of Hunting Horn Players"

Massimo Alesii - Scientific Coordinator of the UNESCO element "The Celestinian Forgiveness Celebration (Perdonanza Celestiniana)"

Valentina Zingari - Scientific Coordinator of the UNESCO element "Tocati – A Shared Programme for the Safeguarding of Traditional Games and Sports"

Rosaro Perricone - Scientific Coordinator of the UNESCO element "Opera dei Pupi – Sicilian Puppet Theatre"

Giovanni Calabria - Mayor of Palmi, representing the Network of Italian Shoulder-Borne Processional Structures

Fabio Madau, Luca De Risi, Massimo Mecarini, Marco Gagliostro - Representatives of the UNESCO element "Network of Festivals of the Large Italian Shoulder-Borne Processional Structures"

Discussion

19:00

The Riace Bronzes: Heritage of the Mediterranean, Heritage of Humanity

Performance by **Daniele Castrizio** and **Saverio Autelitano**

A Calabrian Story Stories & Music

Massimo Cusato: narrator and percussion | **Mico Corapi**: vocals and traditional calabrian instruments

11:00

Thematic Session 8

Closing Session and Summary of the Thematic Discussions, with Presentation of the Key Principles of the "Gerace Charter for the Sustainable Development of Historic Villages"

Objective

To hold an open session presenting the preliminary outcomes of the discussions and the operational recommendations developed during the seminar programme.

Chairs

Patrizia Nardi - *Scientific Director of Gerace Heritage Lab 2026*

Francisco Javier López Morales - *Strategic Coordinator of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro UNESCO nomination*

Marcelino Sánchez Ruiz - *Former Director General for Cultural Heritage of the Regional Government of Andalusia, responsible for the UNESCO nominations of the Andalusian cities of Úbeda and Baeza and the Olive Landscapes of Andalusia. Expert in the protection and development of small historic towns*

Claudio Bocci - *Former Director General of Federculture*

Francesco Vigliarolo - *Professor and UNESCO Chair Holder in Economic Systems and Human Rights at the National University of La Plata*

Stefania Baldinotti - *Anthropologist and expert in bottom-up community engagement processes. Head of the Visual Anthropology Archive and Audiovisual Laboratory of the Central Institute for Intangible Heritage (ICPI), Ministry of Culture*

Paolo Patanè - *Representative of the World Heritage Centre for the site Late Baroque Towns of the Val di Noto and Director of the Coordination of UNESCO Municipalities of Sicily*

Concetta Cataldo - *PhD Candidate at the University of Catania and Technical Secretary of the Thematic Sessions*

Discussion

16:00

Visit to Reggio Calabria

- The Riace Bronzes and the National Archaeological Museum of Reggio Calabria
- The Falcomatà Waterfront, known as "the most beautiful kilometre in Italy"



Speakers



Patrizia Nardi

Patrizia Nardi is a contemporary historian and an expert in strategic planning for the protection, safeguarding, promotion and enhancement of UNESCO Heritage, including through international cultural diplomacy initiatives. She designs UNESCO nomination processes and conceived the Network of Italian Festivals of the Large Shoulder-Borne Structures, which UNESCO has described as an “example, model and source of inspiration”.



Nacho Gómez Arriola

An international expert in UNESCO 1972 Convention nominations, he has coordinated and prepared technical dossiers that led to the inscription of several sites on the World Heritage List, including the Agave Landscape and Ancient Industrial Facilities of Tequila (2006), Hospicio Cabañas (1997), and the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (2010). He also developed the corresponding Management Plans to ensure their long-term protection and conservation.



Francisco Javier López Morales

For 35 years, he served as Director of UNESCO World Heritage for the United Mexican States and as Mexico's delegate to UNESCO. He contributed to the drafting of the 1972 UNESCO Convention and the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. He oversaw all 35 UNESCO inscriptions of Mexico and numerous international nominations, including several in Italy. He served as a member of the Subsidiary Body of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and as Vice-President for Latin America of ICOMOS International.



Luis Pablo Martínez Sanmartín

Graduated in Geography and History from the University of Valencia (1991), with specialisations in Medieval History and in Social and Cultural Anthropology from Miguel Hernández University (2013), he works in the fields of intangible cultural heritage and traditional irrigation systems. For the Generalitat Valenciana, he coordinated the UNESCO nominations of the Palm Grove of Elche (2000), the Mystery Play of Elche (2001), the Water Tribunals of Mediterranean Spain (2009), and the Pusol School Museum Centre for Traditional Culture (2009).



Marcelino Sánchez Ruiz

Former Director General for Cultural Heritage of the Regional Government of Andalusia, he coordinated the process that led to the inscription of Úbeda and Baeza on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2003. Later, as Director General for Heritage, he played a leading role in the project for the recognition of the Olive Landscapes of Andalusia. He is an expert in the protection and sustainable development of historic towns and villages.



Xavier Castro Pérez

Historian, academic and researcher at the University of Santiago de Compostela, Xavier Castro Pérez is one of the foremost experts on the Camino de Santiago, a European Cultural Route. Author of numerous studies and essays on the history, culinary traditions and wine culture of pilgrims, he works with the Cátedra del Camino de Santiago on issues related to the intangible cultural heritage of pilgrimage routes.



Bienvenido Maquedano Carrasco

Bienvenido Maquedano Carrasco is a cultural heritage specialist with expertise in the management, protection and enhancement of intangible heritage. He served as Head of Section at the Regional Ministry of Culture of Castilla-La Mancha. He contributed to the UNESCO nomination dossier for the ceramic craftsmanship of Talavera de la Reina and El Puente del Arzobispo (2019). He is an expert in safeguarding traditional craftsmanship knowledge and skills.



Francesco Vigliarolo

Since 2013, Francesco Vigliarolo has been Full Professor of Regional Economics at the Catholic University of La Plata and is a social economist. At the National University of La Plata, he serves as Director of the UNESCO Chair in Economic Systems and Human Rights, established in 2022 in collaboration with approximately twenty universities. For many years he has devoted his research to what he defines as the ontological foundations of economics, publishing more than fifteen books and dozens of scientific articles.



Ricardo Araújo

Mayor of Guimarães (Portugal). The historic centre of Guimarães was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2001, and the city was awarded the title of European Capital of Culture in 2012.



Ricardo José Fernandes Rodrigues

Architect and Head of Division at the Municipality of Guimarães. A PhD candidate in Architecture at the University of Porto, he conducts research on the UNESCO site of Guimarães and on urban intervention models. His areas of expertise include architecture, urban planning, restoration, construction and cultural heritage.



Isabel Ferreira

Councillor for Culture and Tourism of the Municipality of Guimarães, with responsibilities for youth, education, libraries, culture, tourism, archives, innovation and information systems. She is an Adjunct Professor at the Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave and holds a PhD in Information Systems and Technologies from the University of Minho. Her work focuses on public policies and e-government.



Carmen de Jesus Geraldo Carvalheira

Councillor for Cultural Affairs of the Municipality of Évora, a Portuguese UNESCO World Heritage City and European Capital of Culture 2027, with responsibilities for socio-cultural affairs, education, social inclusion and health. She holds a degree in Civil Engineering, a Master's degree in Urban Engineering and a PhD in Civil Engineering, specialising in urban planning, territorial development and transport systems. She previously served as Vice-President of the Alentejo Regional Coordination and Development Commission.



Miguel Correia dos Reis Pedro

Head of the Culture and Heritage Division of the Municipality of Évora. A graduate in Sociology from the University of Évora, he has extensive experience in local government, regional development, cultural management and public policies for heritage. He has collaborated with the Intermunicipal Community of Central Alentejo, local development organisations and the Eugénio de Almeida Foundation. He will participate as technical speaker on behalf of the Municipality of Évora.



Paulo Cesar Azevedo de Faria

Paulo Faria, Head of Culture and Heritage of the Municipality of Évora, is Managing Partner of Rittma and holds postgraduate qualifications in Economics and Public Policy. He specialises in public policies, territorial development and change management, supporting public and institutional organisations in strategy development, transformation processes and development projects.



Leandro Ventura

Leandro Ventura is an art historian and senior official of the Italian Ministry of Culture. He has served as Regional Secretary for Molise and as Director of the Museum of Civilisations in Rome. He currently serves as Director of the Central Institute for Intangible Heritage. A lecturer at numerous Italian universities, he specialises in court patronage between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and is the author of several monographs and scholarly publications.



Stefania Baldinotti

Stefania Baldinotti is an anthropologist, an official of the Italian Ministry of Culture (MiC), and Deputy Director of the Central Institute for Intangible Heritage (ICPI), where she is responsible for the Visual Anthropology Archive and Laboratory. Among her most recent projects are the photographic exhibitions “Annabella Rossi. The Poetics of Reality” and “Acrobats, Fakirs and Amusement Parks.” She explores innovative approaches to communicating intangible cultural heritage through immersive technologies and promotes its international visibility by connecting tradition with contemporary art.



Fabrizio Sudano

Fabrizio Sudano is an archaeologist and senior official of the Italian Ministry of Culture. Since 2023, he has served as Director of the National Archaeological Museum of Reggio Calabria and also carries out managerial responsibilities within the network of state museums in Calabria, focusing on the management and enhancement of the region’s archaeological heritage.



Vincenzo Santoro

Vincenzo Santoro is Head of Culture and Tourism at ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) and Director of the AICOTUR Association. He works on cultural and tourism policies for local authorities, with a particular focus on the enhancement of territories and Italian cultural identities.



Carmelo Lentino

Carmelo Lentino is Chief of Staff to the Undersecretary of State for Economy and Finance at the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance. He is also President of Meraviglia Italiana, an organisation dedicated to promoting and enhancing Italy’s cultural and tourism heritage.



Gian Maria Fara

Gian Maria Fara is National President of EURISPES (Institute of Political, Economic and Social Studies). A sociologist and analyst, he specialises in social, economic and political research, coordinating studies and reports on the major issues and trends affecting contemporary society.



Maurizio Lovecchio

Born in Reggio Calabria in 1973, Maurizio Lovecchio lives and works in Rome as a business consultant. He holds a degree in Political Science and a Master's degree in Business Management and Strategic Marketing. A reserve officer of the Italian Army, he specialises in public funding, research and innovation. He is Head of the Incentivised Finance Department at Webgenesys S.p.A., a member of the EURISPES Scientific Committee, and a member of the Steering Committee of the Department of Mechanical, Energy and Management Engineering (DiMEG) at the University of Calabria.



Loredana Giannicola

Loredana Giannicola is Director General of the Regional School Office for Calabria. She is responsible for the coordination and management of the regional education system, providing strategic direction, organisational oversight and support to educational institutions throughout the region.



Alberto Ziparo

Alberto Ziparo, former Professor at the University of Florence, specialises in environmental planning, infrastructure assessment and sustainable mobility. He has contributed to territorial and landscape planning projects, collaborates with territorial action groups and serves on the Executive Board of the Society of Territorialists (SdT). Among the publications he has edited is *Lo Stretto in lungo e in largo* (The Strait Far and Wide), co-edited with G. Fera (Reggio Calabria, 2016).



Sonia Anelli

Sonia Anelli is Director of the Belluno Dolomites National Park. She is responsible for the management and protection of the park's natural heritage, promoting biodiversity conservation and the sustainable enhancement of the territory.



Giuseppe Bombino

Former President of the Aspromonte National Park and Aspromonte UNESCO Global Geopark, Giuseppe Bombino also served as a member of the Technical and Scientific Committee of the UNESCO MAB Sila Biosphere Reserve. He is currently President of the Grecanica Area Local Action Group (GAL Area Grecanica).



Paolo Patanè

Paolo Patanè, a native of Catania, holds degrees in Law and Political Science and is a legal expert in public administration. He serves as Representative of the World Heritage Centre for the UNESCO site Late Baroque Towns of the Val di Noto, whose managing authority he directs. He is Chief Executive Officer of the Eastern Mediterranean University Consortium and Project Manager of the Mitoraj Foundation. He previously served as Chief of Staff to the Mayors of Catania and Noto, Director of the Coordination of UNESCO Municipalities of Sicily, and National President of Arcigay.



Daniele Castrizio

Daniele Castrizio is Full Professor of Numismatics at the University of Messina. His research focuses on Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Early Medieval coinage, with particular attention to the relationships between numismatics, iconography and archaeology. He is the author of numerous scholarly publications and is actively engaged in research and public dissemination in the field of ancient history.



Giorgio Andrian

Giorgio Andrian, geographer and PhD, has developed extensive international experience in research, cooperation and UNESCO programmes, where he worked for seven years as both consultant and international officer. Since 2011, he has coordinated UNESCO nominations in several countries and has specialised in heritage management and international relations. He coordinated the successful UNESCO nomination of Padova Urbs Picta and is a lecturer at the University of Padua.



Roberto Quatraccioni

Roberto Quatraccioni is a consultant in place marketing, community marketing and destination management. For more than twenty years, he has supported public authorities, businesses and organisations in enhancing cultural heritage, promoting sustainable tourism development and designing territorial growth strategies. An expert in European programmes and international cooperation, he advocates development models based on community participation, innovation and sustainability.



Peppino De Rose

Peppino De Rose is an economist and expert in European Union cohesion policies and programmes at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (NUVAP/DPCoe). He teaches European Project Design and International Relations for SMEs at the University of Salento, and Digital Markets and International Tourism Enterprise at the University of Calabria.



Adriana Miotto

Adriana Miotto is an expert in sustainable tourism and UNESCO site management. She is the founder of Just Good Tourism, through which she promotes responsible tourism development models and the sustainable enhancement of cultural and natural heritage.



Vanessa Vaio

Vanessa Vaio is an expert in World Heritage interpretation and a facilitator of UNESCO-related initiatives and programmes. She specialises in the enhancement and communication of cultural and natural heritage, supporting institutions and territories in the development of projects linked to UNESCO sites and programmes.



Luca De Risi

Luca De Risi graduated in Law from the University Federico II of Naples. He has been a civil lawyer since 2006 and is registered with the Nola Bar Association, specialising in civil law. Since 2010, he has also worked as a forensic handwriting consultant for the Court of Nola. He serves on the examination board of the School of Specialisation in Law at the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli and, since 2021, has been President of GRAMAS – Great Italian Shoulder-Borne Structures UNESCO Heritage Association.



Fabio Madau

Fabio Madau is Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Sassari. He is President of the Intergremio Città di Sassari, the association that brings together the Gremi, the historic guilds that organise the traditional Discesa dei Candelieri festival. He is a member of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Network of Italian Large Shoulder-Borne Structures and serves on both the Historical Commission for the Faradda and the Documentation Centre on the Gremi and the Candelieri.



Massimo Mecarini

Massimo Mecarini is President of the Sodalizio dei Facchini di Santa Rosa in Viterbo. He leads the organisation responsible for coordinating the renowned transport of the Macchina di Santa Rosa, a symbol of the city's identity and a centuries-old tradition held every year on 3 September. Under his leadership, the Sodalizio promotes the cultural enhancement and transmission of this historic event to future generations.



Marco Gagliostro

Marco Gagliostro is a lawyer and, since 2020, has served as representative of the practicing and festive community of the Varia di Palmi and Secretary of the GRAMAS Network – Great Italian Shoulder-Borne Structures. He is also Prior of the Venerable Confraternity of Maria Santissima del Soccorso. He served as Secretary of the Varia Committee (2013, 2014 and 2016) and is Vice-President of the Cultural Association Per Palmi, one of the signatories of the UNESCO nomination submitted by the Network.



Rosario Perricone

Rosario Perricone is a lecturer at the University of Palermo and a scholar of cultural anthropology. He is recognised as one of the leading experts on the tradition of the Sicilian Puppet Theatre (Opera dei Pupi), on which he conducts research, documentation and heritage enhancement activities within the framework of UNESCO-recognised intangible cultural heritage.



Antonella Brancadoro

Antonella Brancadoro is responsible for the management and organisational secretariat of the Association “Truffle Hunting and Extraction in Italy: Traditional Knowledge and Practices”, based in Alba (Cuneo). She serves as community representative for the UNESCO nomination and coordinates the technical-scientific committee. Acting as a community mediator, she contributed to the preparation of the nomination dossier, including ICH nomination forms, annexes and inventory records.



Massimo Alesii

Former Member of the National Observatory for UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Italian Ministry of Culture (2021–2023), Massimo Alesii serves as UNESCO ICH Focal Point and elected Dean of the Perdonanza Celestiniana Festival Committee Association. He previously coordinated, on behalf of the Municipality of L’Aquila, the revision of the UNESCO nomination of the Celestinian Forgiveness Celebration (Perdonanza Celestiniana), inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2019. He was spokesperson of the Official Perdonanza Celestiniana Committee from 2018 to 2020 and subsequently served as a full member with responsibility for UNESCO ICH matters until 2022.



Giorgio Marinello

Engineer Giorgio Marinello (Venice, 1954) pursued his professional career in the industrial sector. In the field of cultural volunteering, he founded the Percorsi Association in 1996, later renamed Accademia di Sant’Uberto Percorsi 1996 – ETS, established to support the restoration and enhancement of the Royal Palace of Venaria. Its activities focus on courtly leisure culture, including the Musical Art of Hunting Horn Players, inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2020 through a multinational nomination submitted by France, Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg.



Valentina Zingari

Valentina Zingari is the Scientific Coordinator of “Tocati – A Shared Programme for the Safeguarding of Traditional Games and Sports”, which has been inscribed in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices under the 2003 UNESCO Convention. Her work focuses on research and project development in the fields of intangible cultural heritage and traditional practices.



Francesco Calzolaio

Francesco Calzolaio, architect, is President of Venti di Cultura, Coordinator of the Faro Italia Platform, and a member of the Board of ICOMOS Italy. His work focuses on research, project design and territorial cultural networks, with particular attention to participatory processes, accessibility and digital innovation. Among other initiatives, he coordinated the Faro Italia Platform and the Master Plan for the UNESCO World Heritage site “Venice and its Lagoon.”



Giacomo Oliva

Giacomo Maria Oliva (1953), historian and scholar of cultural heritage, is Director of the Diocesan Museum and Treasury of Gerace Cathedral and President of the Piccolo Museo di San Paolo Foundation. A former official of the Italian Ministry of Culture and of the National Central Library of Rome, he is the author of numerous publications and curator of exhibitions and conferences. In 2010, he was awarded the Cross of Merit of the Italian Republic for his contribution to culture.



Giuseppe Mantella

Giuseppe Mantella is Director of the Deputation for the Management of the Episcopal Citadel of Gerace. He is responsible for the protection, enhancement and management of this historic and monumental complex, promoting its conservation and public accessibility as a key component of the city’s cultural heritage.



Luca Bruschi

Luca Bruschi holds a degree in Cultural Heritage and a Master’s degree in Tourism Economics. Since 2004, he has been actively involved in the development of the Via Francigena and European cultural routes. He has worked with public institutions in the fields of culture, tourism and international relations. Formerly Project Manager of the Council of Europe Cultural Routes Programme, he has served since 2015 as Director of the European Association of the Via Francigena Ways and coordinates the UNESCO nomination process for the Via Francigena.



Emanuela Panke

Emanuela Panke holds a degree in Communication Sciences and specialises in Agri-food Marketing. For more than twenty-five years, she has worked in the fields of cultural tourism, food and wine tourism, and international cooperation. A consultant in place marketing and sustainable development, she has served since 2016 as President of the European Federation Iter Vitis. She has coordinated numerous European and international projects dedicated to culture, wine tourism and heritage enhancement.



Lorenzo Bongirolami

Lorenzo Bongirolami has been Full Professor of Regional Economics at the Catholic University of La Plata since 2013 and is a social economist. At the National University of La Plata, he serves as Director of the UNESCO Chair in Economic Systems and Human Rights, established in 2022 in collaboration with approximately twenty universities. For many years, he has devoted his research to what he defines as the ontological foundations of economics, publishing more than fifteen books and dozens of scholarly articles.



Claudio Bocci

Claudio Bocci, born in Rome in 1954, holds a degree in Political Science (Political and Economic Studies) from the University of Rome. He served as Director General of Federculture until 2020, where he was responsible for strategic planning and institutional relations. He is the founder of Ravello Lab and served as President of the Scientific Council of the UNINT Master's Programme in World Heritage Management. Since 2021, he has been President of the Culture of Travel Association. He is the author of several essays on culture and tourism.



Alessandra Mazzei

Lecturer, cultural manager and project designer, Alessandra Mazzei has extensive experience in heritage enhancement processes, identity-based tourism, territorial governance and network building. She has developed expertise in the cultural direction of complex events, participatory planning and the development of integrated strategies involving local authorities, universities, institutions, schools, third-sector organisations and local communities. She is President of the Rossano Purpurea Association.



Giovanni Russo

Born in Orsomarso (Province of Cosenza) in 1960, Giovanni Russo lives in Florence, where he graduated with honours in Foreign Languages and Literatures. A scholar of Magna Graecia, Italo-Greek monasticism and French-speaking travellers in Calabria between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he has published numerous essays and books, including *The Valley of the Monasteries*, *The Legacy of the Gaze*, *Rocky Solitude* (Ferrari), and *Guide to the Monasteries of the Mercurion* (Rubbettino).



Domenico Cappellano

Domenico Cappellano is a former Deputy Director of the Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria. In 2012, he co-founded the Reggio Calabria Territorial Club of the Italian Touring Club together with Francesco Zuccarello Cimino, and since 2016 he has served as Regional Consul of the Touring Club Italiano for Calabria. He promotes cultural and territorial enhancement initiatives, including the opening of the Hellenistic Necropolis of the National Archaeological Museum of Reggio Calabria (MArRC), as well as public initiatives supporting infrastructure development, including the Salerno–Reggio Calabria high-speed railway project. He also served as President of the Municipal Toponymy Commission.



Rocco Gangemi

Rocco Gangemi is an architect specialising in cultural heritage and environmental conservation. Throughout his career, he has worked in restoration and heritage enhancement, archaeology and museography, and has curated conferences and exhibitions on ancient and modern art. He was formerly Head of the FAI (Italian Environment Fund) Delegation of Reggio Calabria and a member of the FAI Calabria Regional Board. He is currently a member of GEA – the Aspromonte Hiking Group – and is actively involved in the protection, promotion and dissemination of the region's cultural, landscape and environmental heritage.



Cataldo Concetta

Concetta Cataldo is a classical philologist and archaeologist, currently pursuing a PhD in Heritage and Cultural Production Studies at the University of Catania. Her research focuses on Intangible Cultural Heritage and the management of Communities of Practice. She is a member of the Scientific and Technical Coordination Team of the UNESCO Perspective Project, which supports the UNESCO ICH 2003 nomination of the element "Rites and Celebrations of the Italian Holy Week."



Luisa Vietri

Luisa Vietri is an expert in the cataloguing of demo-ethno-anthropological heritage, both tangible and intangible, from Italy and beyond Europe. She has coordinated participatory inventorying campaigns for UNESCO 2003 Convention nominations. Her scientific collaborations include the Central Institute for Catalogue and Documentation (ICCD), the Central Institute for Intangible Heritage (ICPI), the National Prehistoric and Ethnographic Museum "Luigi Pigorini", and the Bank of Italy.



Vincenzo Scordo

Originally from Tropea, Vincenzo Scordo developed his global outlook through experiences living in Italy, Spain and Australia, learning to discover beauty in authentic and lesser-known places. Founder of Visit Mediterraneo, he promotes authentic, sustainable and food-and-wine tourism experiences. He collaborates with Visit Italy on territorial marketing campaigns dedicated to the "99% of Italy." As creator of the Slow Village – Living in Calabria project, he promotes the enhancement of Calabrian historic villages through Community-Based Tourism. He believes in a sustainable development model rooted in culture, innovation and local communities, a vision inspired every day by his three daughters.



Sabrina Scalera

Sabrina Scalera is a manager at the Aspromonte National Park Authority and a member of the Aspromonte UNESCO Global Geopark team. She is involved in the management, promotion and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage of the Aspromonte area, contributing to sustainable development initiatives, environmental protection activities and cooperation within UNESCO networks.



Domenico Romeo

Domenico Romeo is Head of the Technical Department of the Municipality of Gerace and Sole Project Manager (RUP) of the “Gerace Porta del Sole” project, funded under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) – Attractiveness of Historic Villages Programme. He coordinates the planning and implementation of urban regeneration projects, cultural heritage enhancement initiatives and measures supporting the city’s economic activities, ensuring the achievement of the project’s objectives.



Loredana Panetta

Loredana Panetta is Head of the Administrative Department for Culture and Tourism of the Municipality of Gerace and Project Manager of initiatives funded through European and national programmes. She is responsible for the design, management and communication of projects aimed at enhancing cultural heritage, promoting the sustainable development of historic villages and fostering territorial cooperation, while encouraging dialogue among institutions, local communities and international networks.



Marisa Larosa

Marisa Larosa is Councillor for Culture and Tourism of the Municipality of Gerace. For many years, she has been active in cultural planning and territorial promotion, supporting institutions and communities in the enhancement of both tangible and intangible heritage. She advocates a vision of culture as a tool for identity-building, participation and the sustainable development of historic villages.



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NATIONAL RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PLAN (PNRR)

Mission 1 – Component 3 – Measure 2 – Investment 2.1 “Attractiveness of Historic Villages” – Line A “Gerace Porta del Sole”

Domenico Romeo - Head of the Technical Department of the Municipality of Gerace, Project Designer and Works Execution Director

Loredana Panetta - Head of the Administrative Department for Culture and Tourism of the Municipality of Gerace