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## PRESS RELEASE

### 7 MOST ENDANGERED PROGRAMME 2023

#### Partisan Memorial Cemetery in Mostar shortlisted among the 11 most endangered heritage sites in Europe

*The Hague / Luxembourg, 25 January 2023*

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the 7 Most Endangered Programme in 2023, **Europa Nostra** – the European Voice of Civil Society Committed to Cultural and Natural Heritage – and the **European Investment Bank Institute** have just announced the 11 most threatened heritage sites in Europe shortlisted for this year's edition of the programme.

**The 11 most endangered monuments and heritage sites in Europe for 2023 are:**

- [Partisan Memorial Cemetery, Mostar, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA](#)
- [Kortrijk Railway Station, Kortrijk, BELGIUM](#)
- [Domain and Royal Museum of Mariemont, Morlanwelz, BELGIUM](#)
- [Tchakvinji Fortress, Zugdidi, GEORGIA](#)
- [Sisters' House Ensemble, former Moravian settlement in Kleinwelka, GERMANY](#)
- [Mansion \("Konaki"\) of Gidas, Alexandreia, GREECE](#)
- [Herman Ottó Museum, Miskolc, HUNGARY](#)
- [Memento Park, Budapest, HUNGARY](#)
- [Cultural Landscape of Paštrovska Gora, MONTENEGRO](#)
- [Cultural Landscape of Sveti Stefan, Paštrovići, MONTENEGRO](#)
- [Watermills of Bistrica, Petrovac na Mlavi, SERBIA](#)

The **selection** was made on the basis of the outstanding heritage significance and cultural value of each of the sites as well as on the basis of the serious danger that they are facing today. The level of engagement of local communities and the commitment of public and private stakeholders to saving these sites were considered as crucial added values. Another selection criterion was the potential of these sites to act as a catalyst for sustainable development and as a tool for promoting peace and dialogue within their localities and wider regions.

The 11 endangered heritage sites were shortlisted by an international [Advisory Panel](#), comprising experts in history, archaeology, architecture, conservation, project analysis and finance. Nominations for the 7 Most Endangered Programme 2023 were submitted by member organisations, associate organisations or individual members of Europa Nostra from all over Europe as well as by members of the European Heritage Alliance.

#### **Partisan Memorial Cemetery, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Partisan Memorial Cemetery was built in 1965 in the town of Mostar. It is one of the largest anti-fascist monuments and sites in the Balkans, with its 300-metre-long paved ceremonial pathway rising more than 20 metres up a hill. The cemetery, which features some 700 individual tombstones as grave markers of freedom fighters from the Yugoslav Partisan movement, is part of a series of monuments and sites built in the region in memory of the partisans who died during World War II.

The Partisan Memorial Cemetery was designed by the famous Yugoslav architect Professor Bogdan Bogdanović from Belgrade. Skilled stonemasons built the monument over several years, using over 12,000 carved limestone pieces, rubble from the town's destruction during the war, and traditional stone roof tiles recycled from Mostar houses. The monument was inaugurated in 1965 by the President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the liberation of Mostar from the Nazis and their local allies in 1945.

The Partisan Memorial Cemetery - with its memorial significance and relevance - has become a target for destruction, both in times of war and in times of peace. Although much damaged during the war in 1992-1995, the Partisan Memorial Cemetery suffered further damage in the period following the war. It is important to add that after the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, many memorial sites built after World War II were neglected or even abandoned in the wider region, including the Partisan Memorial Cemetery in Mostar.

After the war, the first conservation and restoration works on the Partisan Memorial Cemetery were done in 2005 with the support of donor funds from the Government of The Netherlands and the Kingdom of Norway, and with co-financing from the City of Mostar and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, the Partisan Memorial Cemetery has been, and still is, one of the region's contested heritage sites. This has resulted in repeated acts of vandalism up until the most recent destruction which happened in June of 2022. This was followed by numerous reactions from the Mayor, the City Council, the Commission to preserve national monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as from anti-fascist activists and associations both at local and international level, and also the reaction from numerous organisations from the territory of former Yugoslavia, which condemned the vandalism of the Partisan Memorial Cemetery. Recently, the Agency "Old City" of the City of Mostar launched the public procurement for the revitalisation, rehabilitation and illumination of the Partisan Memorial Cemetery. However, the monument does not yet have a holistic plan for its conservation and maintenance with a corresponding funding. The whole process of its necessary restoration and revitalisation therefore remains precarious.

The local community in Mostar has developed various campaigns for the legal protection of the Partisan Memorial Cemetery as a Monument of National Importance. Among other initiatives, they produced a [documentary](#) about the history of this memorial site and the threats and challenges it faces today.

The nomination of the cemetery to the 7 Most Endangered Programme 2023 was made by [IDEAA Mostar](#) with the endorsement of the Mayor of Mostar, the Galerija DESSA and Europa Nostra Serbia. The nominator advocates for adequate legal protection of the Partisan Memorial Cemetery following its designation as a Monument of National Importance back in January 2006, for the European and international recognition of its outstanding historical and artistic values, as well as for the development of a sustainable rehabilitation, maintenance and management plan for this exceptional memorial site and the allocation of necessary funds – from local, national and European sources – for the quality implementation of such a comprehensive plan.

The [Advisory Panel](#) of the 7 Most Endangered Programme commented: "*The original design of the Partisan Memorial Cemetery in Mostar deliberately avoids the use of political or religious symbolism but makes use of cosmological symbols reminiscent of pre-Columbian remains and perhaps also referencing similar elements present in medieval sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As such, it is an outstanding example of the high-quality commemorative culture rooted in anti-fascist ideals within SFR Yugoslavia. At the time when Europe seeks to assert and put a much stronger emphasis on the vital importance of the shared values which form the very basis of the entire European project, this significant place of memory located in the Western Balkans should be restored with the support of local, national and European funds and protected for present and future generations.*"

The Executive President of Europa Nostra, Prof. Dr. **Hermann Parzinger**, stated: "*This shortlist covers a wide variety of monuments and heritage sites which are facing different types of serious threats. The local communities and civil society organisations are deeply committed to preserving these remarkable examples of our shared heritage, but they need broader support. We therefore call on local, regional, national and European stakeholders, both public and private, to join forces with Europa Nostra and our network of members and partners to secure a viable future for these shortlisted sites.*"

**The final list of 7 Most Endangered heritage sites in Europe for 2023 will be unveiled in April.**

**PRESS CONTACTS**

**TO FIND OUT MORE**

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**About each shortlisted site:**  
[Information and experts' comments](#)  
[Photos & e-banners & video](#) (in high resolution)

[Press release in various languages](#)  
[www.7mostendangered.eu](http://www.7mostendangered.eu)  
[www.europanostra.org](http://www.europanostra.org)  
<http://institute.eib.org>

[www.ideaa-mostar.com](http://www.ideaa-mostar.com)

## 7 Most Endangered Programme

The [7 Most Endangered Programme](#), which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, is run by [Europa Nostra](#) in partnership with the [European Investment Bank Institute](#). It also has the support of the [Creative Europe](#) programme of the European Union. Launched in 2013, the programme forms part of a civil society campaign to save Europe's endangered heritage. It raises awareness, prepares independent assessments and proposes recommendations for action. It also provides a grant of €10,000 per listed site to assist in implementing an agreed activity that will contribute to saving the threatened site. In most cases, the listing of an endangered site serves as a catalyst and incentive for the mobilisation of necessary public or private support, including funding.

The Executive President of Europa Nostra, Prof. Dr. **Hermann Parzinger**, stated: “*The 7 Most Endangered Programme, which brings together the cultural heritage expertise and advocacy of Europa Nostra and the technical assessment and financial expertise of the European Investment Bank, celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. On behalf of Europa Nostra, I wish to thank the European Investment Bank and its Institute as well as all the experts, professionals and volunteers for their significant contribution to saving Europe’s endangered heritage through this meaningful programme*”.

The Director of the European Investment Bank Institute, **Shiva Dustdar**, said: “*The EIB Institute is proud to contribute to safeguarding Europe’s endangered heritage through the 7 Most Endangered Programme with our long-time partner Europa Nostra. For ten years now, this catalytic programme has been facilitating the transfer of know-how and experience between different partners and countries. It is innovative in its format, useful in its purpose and shows the cohesive power of cultural heritage which connects European people and communities*”.

## Europa Nostra

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

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

Europa Nostra is among the official partners of the [New European Bauhaus](#) initiative developed by the European Commission, and is the Regional Co-Chair of the [Climate Heritage Network](#) for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

## European Investment Bank Institute

The [European Investment Bank Institute](#) (EIB-I) was set up within the EIB Group (European Investment Bank and European Investment Fund) to promote and support social, cultural, and academic initiatives with European stakeholders and the public at large. It is a key pillar of the [EIB](#) Group's community and citizenship engagement. More information at <http://institute.eib.org>

## Creative Europe

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