



European Heritage Days
Journées européennes
du patrimoine

European Heritage Days

A joint programme of
the Council of Europe and the European Union

Young European #HeritageMakers Competition

#EuropeanHeritageDays activity oriented towards children and young people

Guidelines

Co-funded
by the European Union



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe

[European Heritage Days](#) (EHD) are the largest cultural events celebrated by people across Europe. Each year, tens of thousands of events are organised in countries that have signed the [European Cultural Convention](#), attracting tens of millions of visitors. EHD, a joint programme by the [Council of Europe](#) and the [European Union](#), is a unique grass-roots initiative shared by millions of Europeans.

YOUNG EUROPEAN HERITAGE MAKERS



Photo: Young European Heritage Makers meeting, Strasbourg 2026

What is it?

The Young European Heritage Makers competition gives children and young people across Europe the opportunity to explore, reflect on, and **express what heritage means to them**. It encourages active participation in heritage discovery and invites participants to share their perspectives through creative means.

Who Can Participate?

The competition is open to young people under 18 years of age in two categories:

AGE GROUP 1 : 6–11 YEARS AGE GROUP 2 : 11–17 YEARS

Group Size

Age Group 1 (6–11 years): No restriction on group size.

Age Group 2 (11–17 years): Groups must have **2–4 participants** to qualify for European-level evaluation

Submission Formats

For Age Group 1 (6–11 years):

✗ Videos will not be accepted for this age group.

✓ Accepted formats include **drawings, photos, or paintings created by the children.**

Each visual work must be accompanied by a **short written explanation or story** (up to 800 words), written by the children themselves, either individually or as a group.

💡 The emphasis is on authentic, child-led expression. Adults may assist with technical uploading, but the ideas, artwork, and words must come from the children.

For Age Group 2 (11–17 years):

✓ Accepted formats include:

- **Videos (not longer than 3 minutes)**
- **Drawings, photos, or paintings**

All entries must be accompanied by a **text description** (up to 800 words) written by the young people.

Facilitator's Role

Facilitators (teachers, youth leaders, heritage professionals, etc.) play a supportive not directive role. Their responsibility is to enable young people to explore and express their heritage freely and safely, without interference or influence.

Facilitators support but do not lead the creative process. Their responsibilities include:

- Helping form groups of interested children.
- Ensuring the activity aligns with the [Council of Europe child safeguarding policy](#). The Council of Europe "[Listen – Act – Change Council of Europe Handbook on children's participation for professionals working for and with children](#)", including new "[Rome Strategy](#)" (2022-2027), adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on 23 February 2022, as well as [the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee](#), which should be consulted before and during the delivery of the activities.

Facilitators should:

- ✓ Provide safe access to heritage sites or materials
- ✓ Encourage open-ended exploration
- ✓ Assist with organising activities and uploading submissions

Facilitators must not:

- ✗ Suggest or impose specific topics, places, or interpretations
- ✗ Write or edit children's text or design their projects
- ✗ Submit content that reflects adult perspectives over children's

⚠ Submissions that are clearly authored or directed by adults, or highlight the role of teachers rather than children, may be disqualified from national or European selection.

Why This Approach Matters

This competition values children's perspectives and creativity. It is not about polished presentations or adult-led narratives, but about how young people see and relate to their heritage. By ensuring children are the creators, we promote inclusion, empowerment, and authenticity in heritage education.

Submission & Selection

All submissions will be published as [Young European Heritage Makers](#) stories and promoted at the European level, after confirmation by national coordinators.

To be eligible for European-level evaluation, entries selected as national winners must include an English-language description.

Evaluation Criteria

- Originality and creativity
- How well the project answers:

What does heritage mean to you?

What do you know about European heritage?

What European story can you find in the heritage around you?

What is the most interesting part of your local heritage?

Consent

Participants' personal data is processed based on consent. Depending on age and national law, this consent might be given by the participant or their parent/guardian. For European winners, separate media consent forms will be required for the visit to Strasbourg.



Prizes

Age Group 1 (6–11 years)

One entry per country will be selected by the National Coordinator.

These selected entries will receive:

- A special European Heritage Days (EHD) goodie bag
- An official certificate

Entries from this age group will not be considered at the European level.

The focus remains on celebrating participation and creativity in a child-friendly and inclusive way.

Age Group 2 (11–17 years)

One entry per country will be selected by the National Coordinator for European-level evaluation.

From these national selections, the **top 5 entries across Europe will be chosen as European winners.**

These five European winners will be invited to **visit Strasbourg in May 2027**, where they will get a chance to meet other young heritage makers, and take part in a visit to European institutions, including the Council of Europe and the European Parliament.

Recognition of Facilitators

The Young European Heritage Makers initiative is designed to highlight the voices, creativity and perspectives of children and young people. Facilitators play an important supporting role by creating safe and enabling environments for participation, but they are not considered mentors, coaches or project leaders within the framework of this activity.

For this reason, **facilitators do not receive certificates**, awards or formal recognition linked to the competition outcomes. All certificates and prizes are reserved for participating children and young people.

Key Dates

1 September 2026 – 15 December 2026: **Organise activities and upload entries**

20 January 2027: Deadline for national coordinators to **submit selected entries to the EHD Secretariat**

February 2027: **European-level evaluation and winners announced**

May 2027: **Strasbourg exhibition and visit for 11–17 age group winners**

Final Note

This competition is about the children and young people—their voices, their heritage, their ideas. Please ensure that all submitted work is genuinely authored by them. Facilitators are there to empower and protect, not to lead or shape the outcome.

Let young voices tell their own stories of Europe's heritage.