

EUROMED

International Conference on Digital Heritage

citizen Heritage



CitizenHeritage is co-financed by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.
Project number 2020-1-BE02-KA203-074727

Showreel of citizen engagement activities with digital cultural heritage: WeAreEuropeForCulture PAGODE Europeana China WEAVE

Euromed 2022, 8 November 2022

Antonella Fresa

Vice president of Photoconsortium



Photo courtesy CRDI – Ajuntament de Girona

- What do we mean with citizen engagement with heritage
- 3 Examples
 - WeAre#EuropeForCulture - co-creation events
 - PAGODE Europeana China - crowdsourcing in Europeana
 - WEAVE - connecting communities with CHIs
- Concluding remarks



Photo courtesy GENCAT Generalitat de Catalunya

Citizen participation is at the basis of citizen science in all domains, and the cultural heritage domain is particularly suitable for stimulating citizen participation.

In fact, cultural heritage is not only a statement of the past and the call its preservation, but it is a living factor that supports processes of **community building, knowledge exchange, mutual understanding and social development.**

Cultural heritage **builds bridges**
among communities in space and in time
among social and groups

Also, certain types of cultural heritage, such
as photographic heritage, easily enable
emotional responses and a desire for
sharing personal views and stories

Bridges among people and their emotions
complement the bigger picture of History

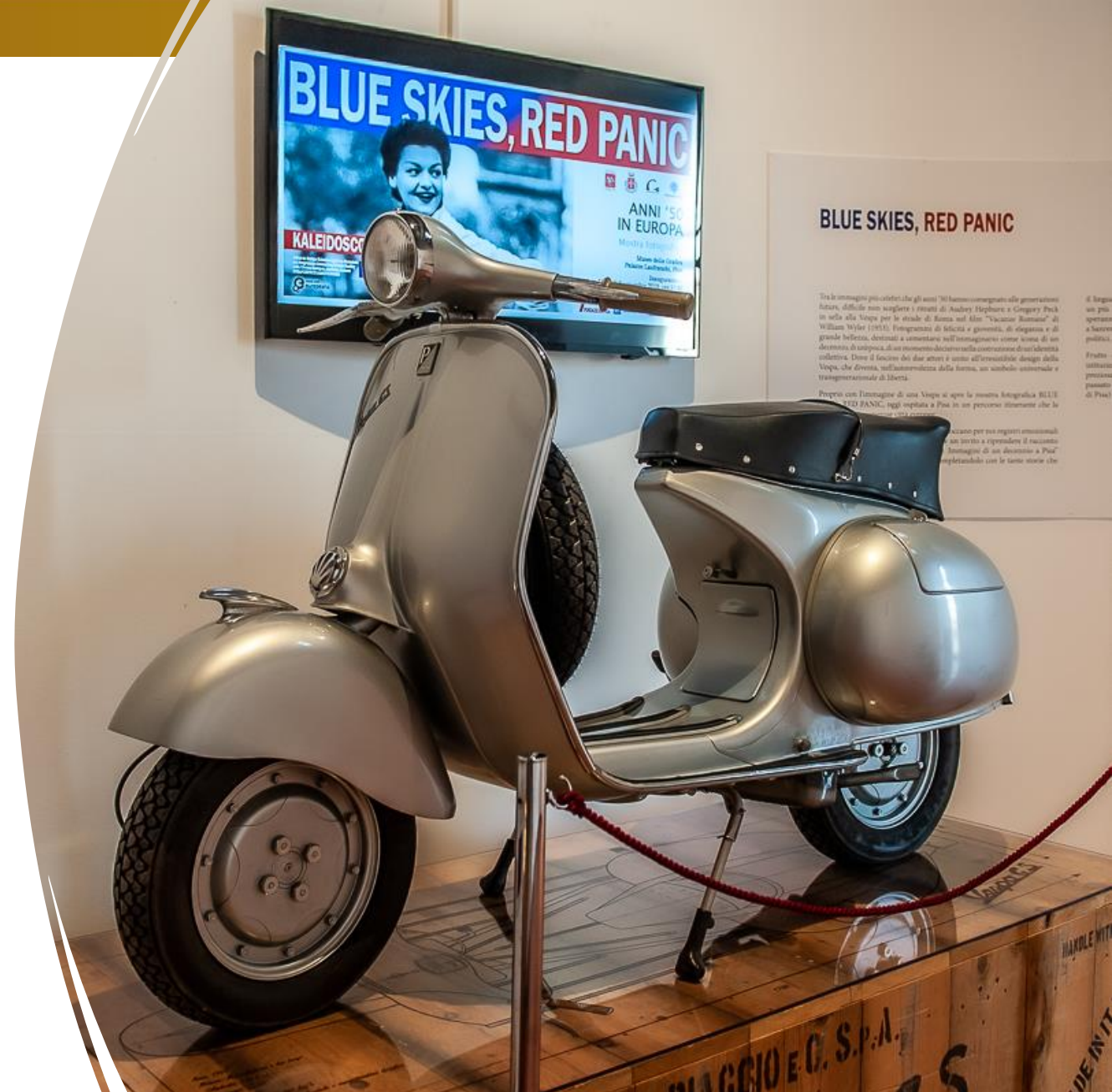


Photo courtesy Promoter s.r.l.



Photo courtesy OSZK

The **European Union** acknowledges the importance of sharing and disseminating European cultures to enable the process of European identity creation.

In line with the core mission of preserving and sharing cultural collections and values, **cultural institutions** are called to play an important role.

Digital technologies are a key for modernizing and extending the access to and the interaction with cultural heritage.

Since 2009, **Europeana.eu** is the flagship project of the EU for the digital access to Cultural Heritage.

There are many examples of citizen engagement with cultural heritage collections, and in this presentation we'll see three:

co-creation events to co-curate exhibitions together with local communities and Cultural Heritage Institutions

crowdsourcing to improve metadata of Cultural Heritage collections in Europeana

connecting local and minority communities with Cultural Heritage Institutions

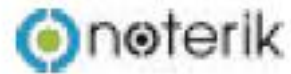


Photo courtesy Promoter s.r.l.

Co-creation events

We are #EuropeForCulture

REACHING AND ENGAGING PEOPLE



<https://www.photoconsortium.net/europeforculture/>

<http://www.digitalmeetsculture.net/europeforculture/>

During 2019, in continuation of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, WeAre#EuropeForCulture organized a wide range of **co-creation events** accross European countries, hosted by members of Photoconsortium network (museums, archives, libraries...).

In the co-creation events, local communities were engaged together with Cultural Heritage Institutions, to co-curate exhibition using storytelling to add their personal stories.

From bread-baking to playing with Cyrillic alphabet; from talking to ex-detainees to engaging seniors and children; from creating with art students to discussing with sports enthusiasts...

... the co-creation events produced **10 cultural heritage exhibitions in 10 European cities**, celebrated in a final event at the House of European History in February 2020.



WeAre#EuropeForCulture is

- 10 exhibitions in 10 European countries, plus a final event in Leuven and Brussels
- Cultural heritage and local history
- Co-creation and crowd-sourcing

WeAre#EuropeForCulture celebrates the diversity of European cultural heritage

WeAre#EuropeForCulture engages citizens in participatory experiences

2018 
EUROPEAN YEAR
OF CULTURAL
HERITAGE
#EuropeForCulture

THE NETHERLANDS

in Amsterdam,
April-May-November

HUNGARY

in Budapest,
April-May

BULGARIA

in Sofia,
May-June

FINLAND

in Hämeenlinna,
June-July

POLAND

in Krakow,
June-July

ITALY

in Pisa,
June-August

SWITZERLAND

in Basel,
September-October

LITHUANIA

in Vilnius, until
January 2020

CATALONIA

in Girona,
October-November

CYPRUS

in Nicosia,
December 2019



All photos are from project's events





The Cypriot instance of the WeAre#EuropeForCulture series was organized in collaboration with the Digital Heritage Research Lab of the Cyprus University of Technology, through a **co-creation process** which included mixing archival photographic content **with crowdsourced images and memories from different local communities**.

A week of 'collection days', in which citizens were invited to bring their pictures, have them digitised, and get their stories captured in audio recordings, yielded an impressive response among others from the Maronite and Asia Minor communities.



*All photos
are from
Cyprus
event*





As a result, interactive virtual exhibitions were created, to revive identity and memory through commemorative photographs **depicting fragments of the lives in Cyprus**, highlighting the rural and urban people, families and daily occupations, activities related to agriculture, manufacturing, mining, education and public life.



The presentation of the co-creation results took place on 18 December 2019 at the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation.



All photos are from Cyprus event

Crowdsourcing



PAGODE
Europeana China

Travel in Tibet #25 | Viaggio in Tibet #25 by Situ Zhaoguang – 1976
Promoter Digital Gallery, Italy - CC BY-SA



PAGODE is a Europeana-focused project to enrich and to improve digital collections of Chinese heritage in Europe – from April 2020 to September 2021

Highlighting Chinese heritage as a part of Europe's cultural history of trade and exchange

Encouraging a better and different understanding of the relationships between East and West

CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

- ★ MISE Italian Ministry of Economic Development
- ★ Promoter srl
- ★ PHOTOCONSORTIUM
- ★ University of Ljubljana
- ★ KIK-IRPA

- ★ UNITED ARCHIVES
- ★ POSTSCRIPTUM

And a number of associate partners: Leiden University Library, Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Museovirasto, Benaki Museum, Wereldculturen, KADOC, ICIMSS



Photo courtesy of Musovirasto

PAGODE results:



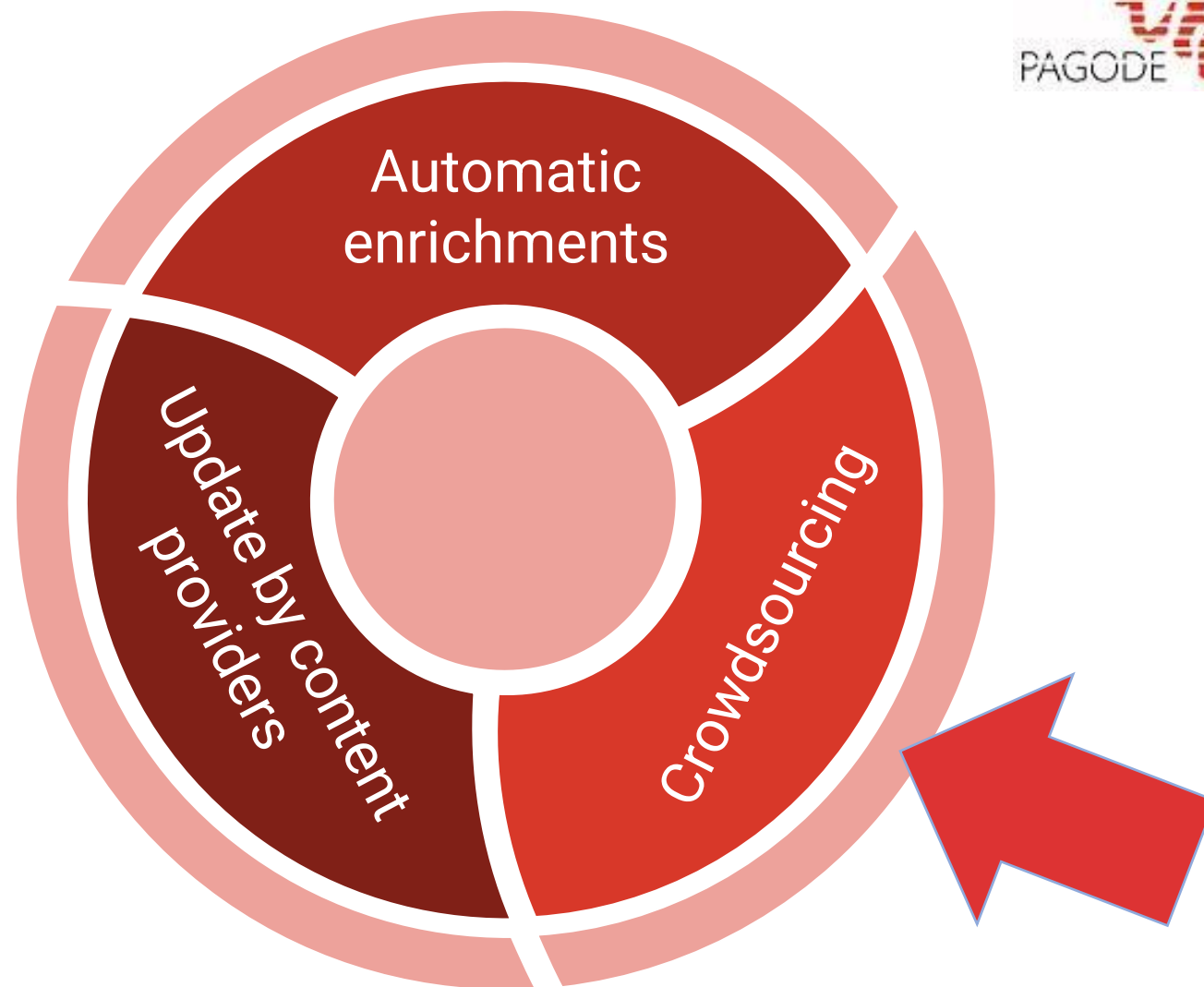
- Publication of **China-related collections** into Europeana
- Establishing successful ways to **discover and to curate** collections through **annotations** and **interlinking**
- **Exhibition** of Chinese and China-related collections from European institutions, offering a first-rate heritage experience and a path of discovery

PAGODE had serious commitments to quality targets for metadata richness of new and existing digital collections of Chinese heritage in Europeana.

The scenario for content enrichment and annotation in PAGODE is composed of 3 actions:

1. Metadata creation for newly digitized records
2. Automatic enrichment applied to collections published in Europeana
3. Manually curated annotations on selected datasets of Europeana

The third action, referred to as the **PAGODE Annotation Pilot**, made use of the open-source platform CrowdHeritage to enable user engagement with Europeana content.



CROWDSOURCING ANNOTATIONS CAMPAIGNS

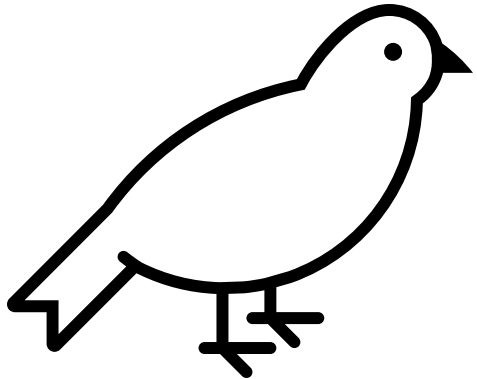
3 different crowdsourcing campaigns run during 2021, with carefully selected and curated Europeana content:

- Scenes and People from China
- Artefacts
- Summer annotation sprint

A human-in-the-loop **validation**, including project partners and sinologists was implemented to assess the crowdsourced annotations, so to grant 100% confidence level of the enrichments sent to Europeana.

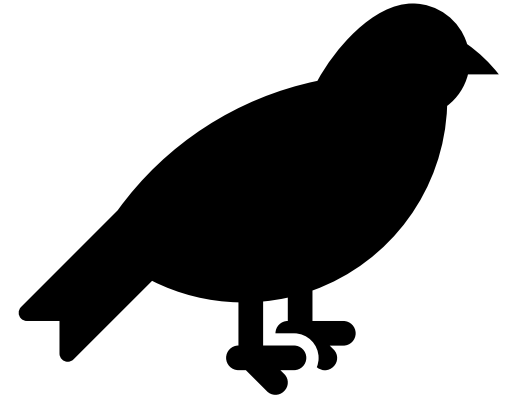
Result: publication of 4,638 enriched annotated records in Europeana

**PAGODE
Annotation
Pilot: two birds
with a stone**



The impact of the crowdsourcing action of the PAGODE Annotation Pilot resulted in a two-fold benefit:

- Enriching metadata in need of improvement with additional keywords
- Enabling user engagement with Europeana content



PAGODE Annotation Pilot: Enrichment of existing Europeana records

The result of the campaigns amounts to:

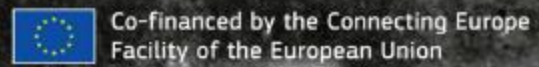
- Publication of 4,638 enriched annotated records in Europeana
- Addition of nearly 100,000 keywords from controlled vocabularies, to records published in Europeana, which originally had poor or incomplete metadata

PAGODE

Annotation Pilot: User engagement with Europeana content

The PAGODE annotations campaigns involved **over 50 contributors** including Sinologists and expert curators, colleagues from Cultural Heritage Institutions and Europeana Aggregators, metadata experts, University students, general public and culture lovers

Connecting



A project about connecting communities with tangible and intangible heritage – from April 2021 to September 2022

Many strands of work composed this project, one of which was focused on **capacity building of Cultural Institutions in engaging communities with heritage.**

A varied programme of events, both onsite and online, supported the effort.

Various resources derived from this work are available to learn from and replicate the methodology at the basis of the events.



LabDays with Communities

September-December 2021

In presence and online events organized with different **cultural communities** and cultural institutions, exploring ways of improving communities' engagement with tangible and intangible heritage

Diversity and Inclusion

February-March 2022

Four online events for cultural heritage professionals on the topics of **diversity and inclusion**, to get a better understanding and inspire each other on how cultural institutions can support a more diverse and inclusive sector

All recordings of the events are available in the project's website and on YouTube channel

Capacity Building

February-May 2022

Series of events organized to explore **different types of capacity building actions** for empowering cultural communities with various approaches to cultural heritage and education.

Linking minority and under-represented communities to their heritage

Partner TopFoto selected for publication in Europeana a photographic collection made of 401 records about Roma heritage and community, which was the focus of a **participatory research and metadata co-curation** prior to Europeana publication.

This work offered the occasion to reflect about possible **contested heritage** or the way that **heritage documentation** may depict minority/marginalized communities.

Especially in the case of very old collections, the original descriptions of the items - or that the items themselves, e.g. heritage colonial videos or photographs - may include **inappropriate terminology or offensive language** towards the community that they intend to represent.



Photo courtesy Topfoto.co.uk



*Widen European Access to Cultural
Communities Via Europeana*

To provide a participatory approach in solving this problem, WEAVE experimented a **co-curation conducted jointly by TopFoto and ERIAC European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture**: media experts in Roma heritage from ERIAC's network were invited to review the collection about Roma heritage that TopFoto intended to provide for publication in Europeana.

This effort was delivered within the scope of WEAVE's capacity building work and quality improvement of heritage collections by building more representative content and metadata.



Photo courtesy Topfoto.co.uk

The analysis of TopFoto's collection by experts' consultation investigated potential problematic issues with current Roma heritage collections and tried to find potential solutions to these.

This consultation process, that went across a series of iterative discussions, generated a number of important outcomes:

- A **“proof-read” collection of heritage photography about the Roma community** is published in Europeana by TopFoto, open for reuse especially in education
- The **WEAVE experience is transferred to other Europeana Aggregators** by the participation of Photoconsortium in two Europeana initiatives: the Aggregators working group on Diversity and Inclusion, which derived a case study about Roma heritage in Europeana; and the Europeana Initiative D&I Task Force;
- Inputs for **Roma-related terminology flew into the WEAVE Intangible Heritage thesaurus**, a selection of relevant terms with links to Getty AAT and Wikidata, that was used in the project to provide automatic enrichments of WEAVE collections



Photo courtesy Topfoto.co.uk

Concluding remarks



Photo courtesy Promoter s.r.l.

This brief showcase of successful projects demonstrates the **variety of actions that enable citizen engagement** with cultural heritage.

Engagement and participation are key **to endorse citizen science** that is desired by research bodies, higher education and cultural heritage institutions.

Lessons to CitizenHeritage

The expected impact of CitizenHeritage relates to stimulating knowledge creation and circulation in and outside academia and in cooperation with citizens, in a sustainable way.

In our project we test **methodologies and formats** to engage citizens with heritage collection, for multiple benefits:

- to include Citizen Science activities into Higher Education Institutions curricula, teaching and learning activities, **thus upskilling the cultural professionals of tomorrow**
- to support Cultural Heritage Institutions engaging with local and minority communities for social purposes and for better **fulfilling their cultural and societal mission**
- to sustain the **digital transformation process** of the cultural heritage sector that enables a more inclusive, modern and open Europe

Many thanks for your attention!

Citizen Heritage

Citizen Science Practices in Cultural Heritage:
towards a Sustainable Model in Higher Education

www.citizenheritage.eu

Contact us: info@photoconsortium.net