

# Engagement through digitization projects: the experience in Sofia, Budapest, Pisa, Cyprus

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**citizen** Heritage



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CitizenHeritage: A new participatory practice  
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- Fostering citizen participation in cultural heritage by digitization projects
- A picture paints a thousands words: engaging university students in metadata curation
- Collection day in Pisa where citizens are invited to share their own photographic heritage
- For professionals: exploring tools and practices in Cyprus

*Image: photo by Sándor Bauer, CC-BY-SA Fortepan via Europeana*





*Photo courtesy GENCAT Generalitat de Catalunya*

Citizen participation is at the basis of citizen science in all domains, and 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

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

**Photographic heritage** enables **emotional responses** and desire for sharing personal stories

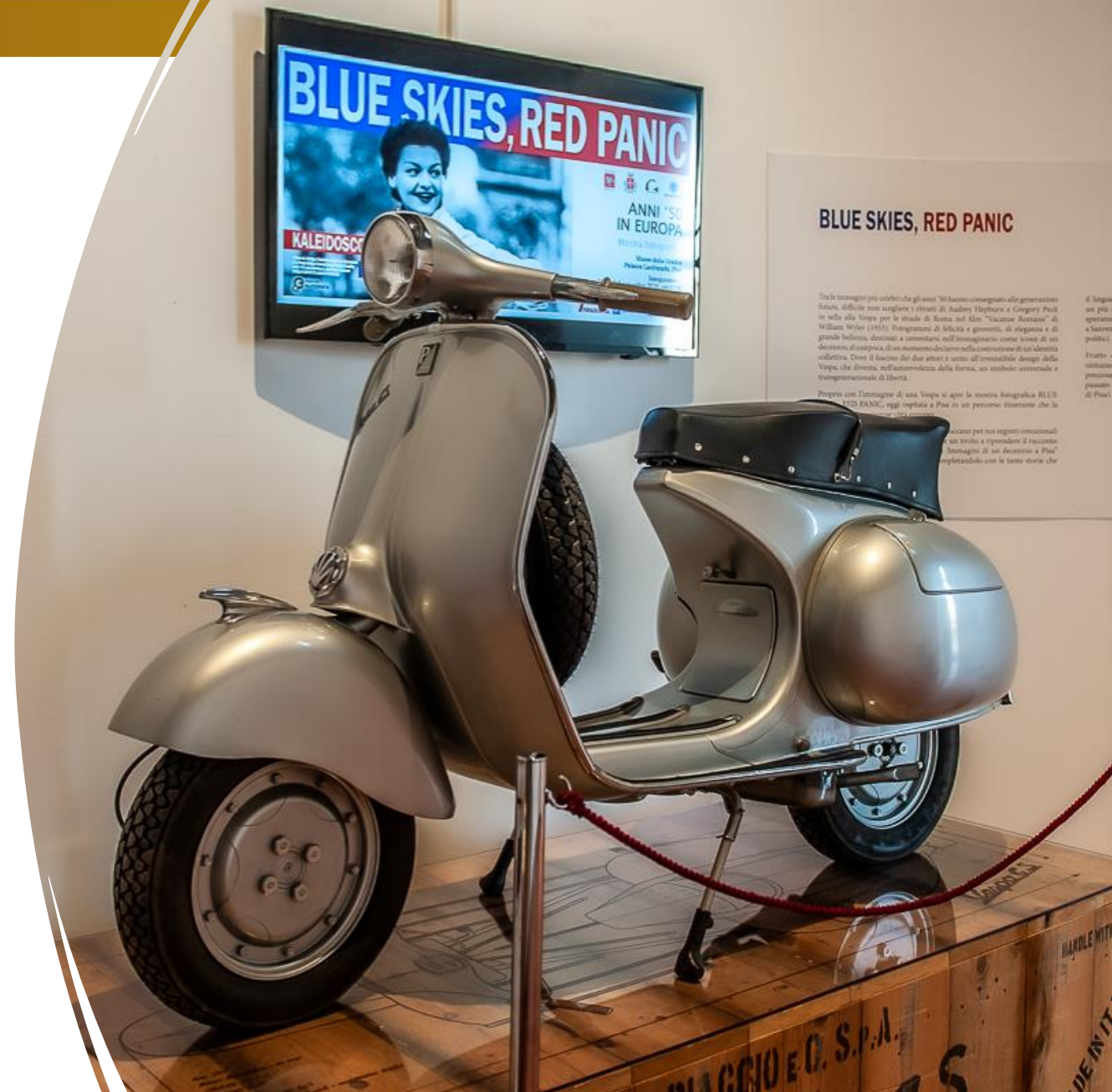


Photo courtesy Promoter s.r.l.



In this presentation we'll see three experiments of citizen engagement run in the course of the Citizen Heritage project:

**crowdsourcing** to improve metadata of Cultural Heritage collections in Europeana

**collection days** to engage local communities and Cultural Heritage Institutions

**interactive tools** for supporting professionals



# Metadata annotations by crowdsourcing

# Metadata matter



*Image by United Archives, In Copyright*

**Rich, Descriptive, Linked,  
Multilingual, Correct,  
Structured, Authoritative,  
Reliable, Meaningful**

Metadata creation and enrichment are a key part of CURATION of digital cultural heritage.

But who is entitled to curation?

# A picture paints a thousand words

Curation of digital cultural heritage is not only reserved to domain experts!

There are metadata properties which can be recognized by everybody

Everyone can participate to metadata enrichment if enabled with user-friendly tools.



*Image by TopFoto, In Copyright*



# History in Pictures from Bulgaria



*Image by NALIS Foundation, Public Domain*

Organized in collaboration with:



SOFIA  
UNIVERSITY



ST. KLIMENT  
OHRIDSKI  
EST. 1888

In this event, students of digital humanities successfully worked on metadata improvement, by annotating and enriching the beautiful digitized collection of **early photography depicting everyday life in Bulgaria**, published by NALIS Foundation in Europeana in 2015.

The result is over 5,000 new tags added to nearly 700 heritage photographs.

# Facts & Fiction: Hungary in b/w photographs



*Image by National Széchényi Library (OSZK) - CC BY-NC-ND*

Organized in collaboration with



In this event, students of film history at Media and Communication department of Pázmány Péter Catholic University worked on metadata improvement, by annotating the collections of OSZK the National Széchényi Library that are published in Europeana, comprising **early photography and film stills**.

The result is over 500 new tags added to over 100 heritage photographs.

# What we understood:

- Easy-to-use platform, possibly with a gaming/challenging element in it
- Compelling content to explore
- A structured system for metadata - controlled vocabularies
- Validation procedures afterwards, to grant accuracy of the metadata additions



*Image by Promoter Digital Gallery - CC BY-NC-ND*



# Collection day and digitisation of family photoalbums

# Pisa Collection Day



*Image by Promoter s.r.l.*

On the occasion of the first Citizen Heritage Multiplier Event held in Pisa, a digitization and collection desk was organized, inviting **participants to share heritage photos from their family albums.**,

Pictures were digitized on the spot by a professional photographer, aggregated by Photoconsortium and **published in Europeana.**

An **evaluation survey** was submitted to the participants to understand their thoughts about sharing personal heritage in the context of an open science approach.

More than 50 people were engaged and participated contributing their pictures and stories.

93 RESULTS FOR citizen heritage collection day



Seaman in Porto S. Stefano #2 -  
Uomini di mare a Porto S. Stefano  
#2

unknown

Promoter Digital Gallery



Two weddings - Due Matrimoni

unknown

Promoter Digital Gallery



The groom with his parents -  
Sposo con i genitori

unknown

Promoter Digital Gallery



At the beach - Al mare

unknown

Promoter Digital Gallery



Portrait of a little girl - Ritratto di  
bambina



Buying a hat - Mi compro un

#### DISCOVER RELATED GALLERIES

Buddhist heritage



LGBTQ+ lives and  
heritage



Art & Industrial  
Heritage



Couple walking in the city -  
Coppia a passeggio in città

unknown

Promoter Digital Gallery



Group photo with pigeons - Foto  
di gruppo con piccioni

Filter results

RESET

THEME

Select a theme

TYPE OF MEDIA

Select types of media

CAN I USE THIS?

Select whether you can use this

PROVIDING COUNTRY

Select providing countries

LANGUAGE

Select languages

AGGREGATOR

PHOTOCONSORTIUM

Select aggregators

INSTITUTION

Select institutions

COLOUR

Select colours

IMAGE ORIENTATION

Feedback



# Capacity building and tools for cultural professionals

# Workshop for professionals in Cyprus



*Image courtesy of Cyprus University of Technology*

In the occasion of the EUROMED 2022 conference in Cyprus, a citizen science workshop for cultural heritage professionals took place, composed by two parts:

Part 1: frontal presentations by experts

Part 2: interactive session: a number of tools were presented and workshop participants both onsite in Cyprus and online could test them with exercises



- > varied range of formats/media
- > different target groups
- > rich storytelling

## Frontal presentations:

- Introduction by Prof. Fred Truyen, KU Leuven, project's Coordinator
- Showreel of citizen engagement activities with digital cultural heritage: WEAVE, PAGODE – Europeana China; WeAre#EuropeForCulture by Antonella Fresa, Photoconsortium
- CrowdHeritage: a tool to easily enable participation in digital cultural heritage by Spyros Bekiaris, National Technical University of Athens
- Citizen science workshops in virtual form: the experience in Sofia and Budapest, Valentina Bachi, Photoconsortium



# Interactive session

Participants were engaged in experimenting a range of digital tools:

- QANDR, a discussion tool very easy to use via personal smartphones
- Europeana Gallery Builder, a curation tool to flag your favorite items on Europeana and easily compile thematic galleries, that are then published on Europeana as user-generated content
- MuPoP, a tool to create virtual exhibitions that can be displayed on a HDMI screen in public space, where users with their smartphones can take control of the screen.

Over 50 participants, on site and online took part in the hands-on experience.

# Concluding remarks



*Photo courtesy Promoter s.r.l.*

- Engagement and participation **endorse citizen science, gathering together citizens**, research, higher education and cultural heritage institutions.
- This brief showcase demonstrates the **variety of actions that can enable citizen engagement** with cultural heritage.
- Citizens are happy to participate, if they are enabled to.



# Many thanks for your attention!

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## **Citizen Heritage**

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

[www.citizenheritage.eu](http://www.citizenheritage.eu)