



# NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2024



## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear EFFORTS network member,

Last month, EFFORTS organised its annual congress in Sibenik, Croatia. 50 participants discussed sustainable business models for fortifications, what the use of networks of fortified sites are, and were taken into the metaverse world. Sibenik is a very active member and I thank the Fortress of Culture for the congress organisation, done together with the EU 'FORTIC' project.

At the EFFORTS Board meeting alongside the congress, the Board decided upon the focus of action for the coming two years. EFFORTS will evolve in 2025 towards a grouping of only cities and regions as full members. All other interested parties are welcome to join efforts with us in the group of associated members. A Membership Charter will be publicised. You will find this and an adapted mission and vision statement on the website.

EFFORTS will continue to work with partner organisations as there are ICOFORT, ICOMOS and others. EFFORTS will focus on reviving the direct communication between member representatives, experts on EU subsidies. In the meanwhile, EFFORTS will continue even more to support the development of regional fortification sites structured cooperation. After the 2023 Flemish Platform of Fortress Cities and the 2024 Wellington Barrier Cities Cooperation (both in Belgium), I am proud to present for 2025 'EFFORTS Ukraine', the newly founded association of EFFORTS sites in Ukraine. We cooperate in this with EFFORTS member Forte Cultura.

This year was also quite 'Finnish': we organised our spring board meeting in our member Suomenlinna in Helsinki, and EFFORTS also participated in September in the same venue in the start of the Erasmus + project 'Resilient Fortress', on the study of best practices on the adaptation by fortress sites to climate change. Kiitos paljon to Suomenlinna.

I also want to repeat here that EFFORTS is putting emphasis on the people that make out our member sites. All EFFORTS network members can use the hashtag **#iamefforts** to support the human effort in EFFORTS. Join the network ! And is there a better way than to join our community next year in Cherbourg in France, where we will organise our 10th EFFORTS annual congress in the sea fort of Querqueville. The main topic is public-private partnership in the reuse of fortification heritage.

I wish you all the best for the holiday season and this I do not without thinking about our Ukrainian EFFORTS members. They are still suffering terribly from the horrific war forced upon them.

Marnic De Meulemeester, Mayor of Oudenaarde, EFFORTS president

# EFFORTS 2025 CONGRESS in SIBENIK (HR)

The congress participants had an interesting exchange of views on recognizing fortification business models to promote sustainable tourism and leverage digital solutions to support vulnerable groups and the heritage community (the case of the EU – Adriatic project FORTIC). Building further on the Maastricht 2024 congress, we checked back with one of the case studies on the reuse of their fortress town. This was Culemborg (Netherlands). See further in this Newsletter on the results obtained. The Metaverse does not hold any secrets anymore for EFFORTS (thank you Forte Marghera). Thank you Nederlandse Waterlinies also for making the case, with EFFORTS, for European network cooperation. Finally, we welcomed the EFFORTS Ukraine member association in our midst. Also, Bart Porskamp, Alderman of Oost Gelre (Groenlo), will represent our regional member city association Vereniging of Dutch Fortress Sites. Next year, we will see each other in the Fort the Querqueville in Cherbourg, France.

See on the website for all information on the programme, speakers and presentations : <https://www.efforts-europe.eu/efforts-2024-congress-sibenik/>

Hereby a few impressions :









## 2024 EFFORTS AWARD to SUOMENLINNA (FI)

The annual EFFORTS Award is given to the EFFORTS member site that has been innovative in attracting new ways to put the attention on the reuse of fortification heritage. The Award is offered by the congress city of that year. The EFFORTS Board act as a jury on the proposal of the presidency. After the 2023 Award went to the Réseau des Grands Sites UNESCO Vauban (FR), Tuija Lind of Suomenlinna (FI) took possession of the Award in Sibenik at the EFFORTS congress.



## ‘RESILIENT FORTRESS’ Erasmus+ 2025

EFFORTS is working in the Erasmus+ EU project ‘Resilient Fortress’. The project counts EFFORTS members Suomenlinna (project leader, FI) with Naarden (NL) and Mont Dauphin (FR). EFFORTS supports the workings of the project. Important is that one of the goals of the project is dissemination. Already other 2 EFFORTS members have shown interest in participating in the project on their own costs. Do contact EFFORTS if you are interested in ‘Resilient Fortress’.

### **Project description**

Climate change creates new risks to cultural heritage and to the biodiversity of cultural heritage sites. The 2022 report of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture "Strengthening the resilience of cultural heritage to combat climate change, where the European Green Deal meets cultural heritage" emphasizes that there is a need to improve access to information on sustainable heritage maintenance and restoration practices at the grassroots level for heritage management and heritage workers. There is an immediate need to develop measures that nurture sustainability and biodiversity, and at the same time create new methods to combat the accelerated decay of heritage caused by the already changed climate conditions. The project responds to these requirements with reference to fortified heritage by identifying and developing updated practices.

The project consists of a series of workshops that include site visits and homework. The main goal is sharing of practices and other peer learning, as well as the identification of the necessary additional climate and diversity information. External environmental climate change expertise complements knowledge gaps.

With the help of cooperation and shared learning, the partners prepare guidance for the restoration, preservation and maintenance of the fortified heritage in such a way that environmental responsibility filters all steps of the measures - part of everyday work. The guidance can be further developed into site-specific practices.

The project implements the priority related to the environment and the fight against global warming by offering experts the opportunity to gain information about climate action and sustainability through peer support and supplementary learning. The project increases the green competence of professionals and employees through peer support between organisations. It strengthens the organisation's green policy and competence in environmental responsibility. The activity supports lifelong learning by applying multidisciplinary approaches to solving current challenges. In addition, the project identifies a need for continuing education related to a sustainable cultural environment, which may serve as a foundation for a follow-up project.

### **Target groups**

- Employees and personnel of the participating organisations from landscape and repair workers to top management, as well as experts from organisations involved in the planning and implementation of the maintenance and repair of fortified structures. The above mentioned will be directly involved in project activities (on-site and on-line peer-to-peer learning hubs).
- Other labour-force. For example, the walls of Suomenlinna fortress are repaired in cooperation with Suomenlinna open prison as prisoner work. Thus, the prisoners learn the skills of repairing traditional walls.
- Students, inhabitants, visitors.
- The national networks (Centre des monuments nationaux (CMN) for the stronghold of Mont-Dauphin, is responsible for 110 (French) national monuments, Stichting Monumentenbezit for the fortifications of Naarden, the Netherlands, is responsible for 32 (Dutch) national monuments) and Finnish national monument organisations are as well directly concerned with the results. Representatives of these organisation will participate in the project activities.

The project's target groups through dissemination or project activities, outputs, and results are:

- European networks - EFFORTS (European Federation of Fortified Sites) linked with FORTE CULTURE (European cultural tourism route connecting fortified sites) who jointly connect over 200 fortifications, castles and walled cities in Europe. Thereby fortified heritage sites across EU will benefit from project dissemination.
- National and international cultural heritage and fortress networks and other stakeholders of partner organisations who can use the results.



# EUROPEAN FORTRESS SUMMER AND NIGHT OF FORTRESSES

## JOIN US!



**REGISTER your fortress summer events as part of the European event platform #EuropeanFortressSummer! You post online, we share to partners Europe-wide!**

**All European fortification sites are invited to participate. Free of charge.**

**Reach more sites and people across Europe. -From March to October-**

**Participation in EFS = entering the EFFORTS *AWARD* contest (winner: at the EFFORTS Congress)**

**PARTICIPATING? Simply register your EFS event online!  
[www.fortress-summer.eu](http://www.fortress-summer.eu)**

**AND POST with #EuropeanFortressSummer #Effortseurope #ForteCultura**



The annual European Fortress Summer event is powered by EFFORTS Europe & FORTE CULTURA



The European Fortress Summer is also the annual May European #NighthofFortresses event. Register at EFS website.

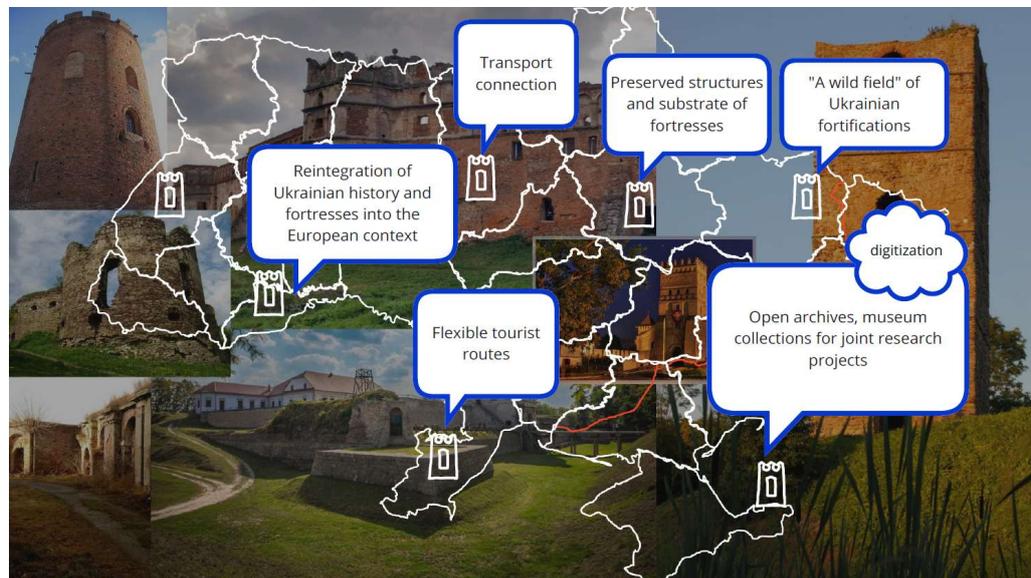


All EFFORTS network members are invited to show what they have in store for the 2024 season: events, visits, workshops, conferences, projects. Show your **European Fortress Summer** action online via our member Forte Cultura. Contact : [office@forte-cultura.eu](mailto:office@forte-cultura.eu)  
Check out online : <https://forte-cultura.com/en/european-fortress-summer/>

EFFORTS member Fortress of Cultura SIBENIK, with EFFORTS and Forte Cultura also organises the annual **Night of Fortresses**. Join us and contact via : <https://nighthoffortresses.org/en/> Registration : <https://nighthoffortresses.org/en/forma-za-prijavu-2024/>

# 'EFFORTS UKRAINE' FOUNDED

EFFORTS is proud that after the 2023 EFFORTS visit to Ukraine and the cooperation with Forte Cultura, we can present here the association of 'EFFORTS Ukraine'. We look forward to new projects with our new members ! See also EFFORTS member Olha Tikhonova's participation in the European Heritage Hub Peer Learning (article below).



# EUROPEAN HERITAGE HUB - PEER LEARNING

Olha Tikhonova, fortifications expert and Ukrainian member of EFFORTS, was selected as one of 20 participants from 90 applicants for a peer-learning visit in Glasgow. The European Heritage Hub, Europa Nostra, and the City of Glasgow organized this event. Over the three-day visit, European heritage experts from across Europe gathered to explore Glasgow's vibrant heritage scene and exchange valuable insights from their local contexts.

Olha Tikhonova presented the Twinning program developed in collaboration with EFFORTS. This program aims to help Ukrainian cities join the European network and apply for grants to preserve their fortified heritage, culture, and identity. Despite initial resistance from some quarters, she has been persistent in emphasizing the importance of heritage protection as part of cultural identity. Through outreach and networking, Olha Tikhonova highlighted the urgency of preserving cultural heritage. By collaborating with organizations in Ukraine and leveraging her extensive European network, she demonstrated the value of cross-border cooperation in heritage conservation. This specially in the light of the ongoing works to found an EFFORTS association in Ukraine (see above in this Newsletter).



## **CULEMBORG (NL): Green oasis after redesigning the entrance to the fortified downtown of Culemborg**

By Sander Booms, municipality of Culemborg, Netherlands

Last year I presented one of the 'cases' on behalf of the city of Culemborg at the Efforts congress in Maastricht. Culemborg, a small city of 30,000 inhabitants with two fortresses in the countryside, has a fortified city center with many monuments but also many petrified squares and unattractive city entrances. With good local cooperation between business owners, residents and municipality, a plan was drawn up with about fifteen projects to improve the spatial quality. We were at the moment to take that plan to a higher level of scale. We looked for a collaboration in which we work with European partners on projects that combine strengthening the quality of public space with climate adaptation. We see added value in sharing knowledge on how to shape a welcoming design of a fortified city in projects. The case presented is mainly that we are a small city with a limited capacity of people and a limited amount of money. This also makes the jump to Europe difficult.

**The experts on the Efforts panel at the EFFORTS congress in Maastricht (2023) gave us the following advice:**

- Make sure you choose projects that make your identity tangible.
- Focus on projects with socioeconomic and climate impact.
- Work on the city's entrances and their historical role.
- Choose! Choose 1 or 2 projects and do them well.
- Look first at what you can offer to Europe instead of first asking Europe what it can provide. If you act this way, Europe itself will come to you.

### **One year later: the result, a metamorphosis**

We followed the advice: last spring the redevelopment of one of the entrances to Culemborg city center took place. The location is a former courtyard where 30 years ago the old city wall was breached to give the area a traffic and parking function. For decades this was an ugly petrified area.

The project was taken up by the Collective Center Culemborg in which residents, shopkeepers, catering entrepreneurs and the municipality worked together in a working group attractive inner city. The result? A visible contribution to a greener entrance to the city center, more attractive for cyclists and pedestrians, more resistant to heavy rainfall and extreme heat, greater biodiversity and a city wall that is better at its best. It has become a green and pleasant entrance to downtown. More than 4,000 square meters of plants have been installed. Measures include water retention, biodiversity greenery and combating heat stress. This is achieved through the construction of wadis, green roofs and facades, and the use of native plantings that promote biodiversity.

### **Why develop precisely this project?**

The site, located at a busy entrance to the old town of Culemborg, used to be a location with rich historical value. Once surrounded by greenery, this location with two squares had completely lost its spatial quality in recent years. Meanwhile, the site was also struggling with

problems such as heat stress, flooding, and a lack of biodiversity. The metamorphosis became the answer to the urgent need for greening and improving the quality of life in the city center. By focusing on this image-defining project, the spatial identity of the entire enhanced downtown received a boost. By adding more greenery and climate adaptive measures, the spatial quality and the economic strength of the city centre are improved. For Culemborg, it is the answer to the city's task of contributing to Efforts promise to contribute to the EU's Green Deal. Culemborg has fulfilled this by increasing the attractiveness of the fortified downtown through climate adaptive measures.



## EU CALLS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



EFFORTS is reactivating its **EU Funding Professionals Network**, first active in 2018-2021. It will replace the Joint Scientific Committee work 2021-2023. EFPN will focus on the communication, within the EFFORTS network on information on European projects. Stay tuned.

## EVENTS

- 25-27 November 2024: **10-year anniversary of EFFORTS member Forte Cultura**



- 10 maart 2025 : **3rd annual conference of the Flemish Fortified Cities** (Overlegplatform van Vlaamse Vestingsteden) in Zoutleeuw.





- 18 – 21 EFFORTS 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress in the Fort de Querqueville in Cherbourg (FR).



## EFFORTS NETWORKS



- EFFORTS is member of the **European Heritage Alliance 3.3** - check out the calendar: <http://europeanheritagealliance.eu/events/> and the Climate Heritage Network and the Heriwell project.



- EFFORTS is a partner of the **International Fortress Council (IFC)**: <http://www.internationalfortresscouncil.org/calendar.html>, **Liberation Route Europe Foundation** [www.LREFoundation.eu](http://www.LREFoundation.eu) [www.liberationrouteeurope.eu](http://www.liberationrouteeurope.eu) and War Heritage Institute's '**Belgium Battlefield of Europe**' network [www.belgiumbattlefield.be](http://www.belgiumbattlefield.be)



- EFFORTS works on an upcoming **Wellington Line project** in Belgium and the Netherlands.



- EFFORTS and the **UN International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)** and the **International Scientific Committee on Fortifications and Military Heritage (ICOFORT)** mutually support each other: <https://www.icomos.org/en/about-icomos/committees/regional-activities-europe/39374-upcoming-events-save-the-date>



For more European news on cultural heritage, see EFFORTS partner: <https://heritagetribune.eu/>

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## EFFORTS INTERSHIPS and VISITS

Do you have the possibility to share the **training of young members of your staff with EFFORTS** or its members, contact EFFORTS !

# I AM EFFORTS

EFFORTS is putting emphasis on the people that make out its member organisations. We have created since 2023 the hashtag **#iamefforts**. All EFFORTS network members can use this to support the *human effort in EFFORTS*. Join the network ! **#iamefforts**

## MEETING PLACE BRUSSELS

Are you planning to come to Brussels? Need an ad-hoc workspace for a few hours or need to make a few copies? We are happy to receive you @ the EFFORTS office in Brussels at Trierstraat 67 rue de Trèves, 1040 Brussels (around the corner from the European Parliament). You can make an appointment at the EFFORTS secretariat [info@efforts-europe.eu](mailto:info@efforts-europe.eu). Also: if you need help contacting an EU official, service or a Member of the European Parliament or you need info on finding your way around Brussels, contact the same mail address.

NEXT EFFORTS NEWSLETTER nr. 31 in February 2023. Send in your information by 31 January 2024.

For more information and all other newsletters, see the EFFORTS website : [www.efforts-europe.eu](http://www.efforts-europe.eu)



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EFFORTS collects, uses and stores the personal data transmitted in accordance with legislation, and, in particular, Reg. 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data (GDPR). If you have questions about or objections to the use of your data for EFFORTS network use, please contact us at:

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