

Care before cure

Recent developments in
European preventive
maintenance &
monitoring projects of
built heritage

Friday 16 October 2026
14.00 - 16.00 CEST



Webinar program

- 14.00 - 14.10: Welcome & Introduction**
Sanne de Koning, Monumentenwacht Noord-Brabant, The Netherlands & Viltė Janušauskaitė, Fixus Mobilis, Lithuania
- 14.10 - 14.30: The importance of maintenance in achieving our sustainability goals**
James Ritson, University of the Built Environment, United Kingdom
- 14.30 - 14.50: From inspection to report: introducing new technologies into preventive heritage maintenance in Slovakia**
Branislav Rezník, Department of Preventive Maintenance of Monuments (OPÚP), Pamiatkový úrad SR / Pro Monumenta, Slovakia
- 14.50 - 15.10: Promoting a culture of maintenance in Switzerland**
Giacinta Jean, Cultural Heritage needs Continuous Care, Switzerland
- 15.10 - 15.30: Maintenance begins with a clean gutter**
Michał Krasucki, National Institute of Cultural Heritage (NID), Poland
- 15.30 - 15.40: Break**
- 15.40 - 15.55: Q&A session 1: discussion between the speakers with questions from the moderator**
- 15.55 - 16.30: Q&A session 2: questions from the chat**

The importance of maintenance in achieving our sustainability goals

James Ritson

University of the Built Environment, United Kingdom

The established and historic nature of our built environment means that, in Europe, a sustainable approach to the existing built environment is required if any of our environmental sustainability targets are to be met. A cohesive and collective strategy to improve the environmental performance of our historic and existing buildings is required.

Maintenance and repair are key factors in sustainable retrofitting, yet they are often ignored or excluded from the scope of the term "retrofit" and are rarely, if ever, included in any sustainability performance metrics. This study will show the importance of building maintenance in the process of sustainable retrofit, using the historic housing stock of the United Kingdom as a case study. The presentation will show that the conservation-based approach of maintenance and benign changes can dramatically improve the environmental performance of this, the largest historic building stock, and that these measures are among the most cost-effective and easiest to implement.



From inspection to report: introducing new technologies into preventive heritage maintenance in Slovakia

Branislav Rezník

Department of Preventive
Maintenance of Monuments
(OPÚP), Pamiatkový úrad SR /
Pro Monumenta, Slovakia

For over a decade the Pro Monumenta system has delivered free preventive inspections of built heritage across Slovakia. Every inspection ends in a Technical Report on the Cultural Monument (TSKP): a condition diagnosis with a plan of interventions and a maintenance calendar. Producing that report is the system's real bottleneck = slow, expertise-heavy, and dependent on a handful of senior inspectors.

This presentation shares our practical, work-in-progress experience of bringing new technologies into both diagnostics and report writing. We describe a fully on-premise local language model and a structured report-drafting tool that encode our own methodology and reliability rules, together with a field pilot using smart glasses for hands-free capture, with all transcription processed locally, so heritage and owner data never leave the building. The guiding principle throughout is that AI drafts, while the inspector remains the author and signatory.

We close with the next step under Pro Monumenta III: a mobile and web application connecting inspectors with owners and caretakers, built in two phases around this same local model. We reflect honestly on the limits, the data-sovereignty constraints, and the open questions this raises.



Promoting a culture of maintenance in Switzerland

Giacinta Jean

Cultural Heritage needs Continuous Care, Switzerland

In Switzerland, as in many other countries, the maintenance of immovable cultural heritage is widely acknowledged and recognised as necessary in theory, but it is rarely implemented in practice.

The project “Cultural Heritage needs Continuous Care” (2025–2029 www.chneedscc.ch), part of the Swiss National Research Programme NRP 81 Baukultur and lead by a research team coordinated by the University of Applied Sciences and Arts (SUPSI), aims to tackle this issue and to promote the introduction of regular maintenance practices, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

The Federal Commission for Historic Monuments is a partner of the project and will use the results to publish a national policy document.

The project is designed with two main working packages. The first will analyse current processes, legislation and practices relating to conservation and maintenance leading to the development of shared guidelines. One part of the project, entitled ‘The Economy of Care’, is dedicated to assessing the economic benefits of regular maintenance compared to traditional restoration projects. The second work package will address practical applications, focusing on three types of cultural heritage: art in public spaces, religious buildings and historic houses.

The project is conducted with a bottom-up approach, with Living Labs addressing problems and solutions with different members of society. Focus groups, workshops and dissemination activities will bring together stakeholders from different regions of the country to discuss needs and proposals. During the webinar, we will present the project’s aim, the work programme, the many public and private partners involved, the progress made so far, and the challenges that we will address in the future.



Maintenance begins with a clean gutter

Michał Krusacki

National Institute of Cultural
Heritage (NID), Poland

In heritage conservation circles, it is customary to refer to historic buildings in terms of renovation, restoration or conservation work. Each of these processes usually involves a great deal of technical and physical labour, but also often a significant financial outlay. However, simply by ensuring the building is used correctly, it is possible to effectively prevent much of the damage caused by the elements or the mere passage of time. The conservation of a historic building should begin with simple, regular tasks, such as cleaning gutters and downpipes, repairing minor damage, periodically cleaning and painting window frames, or repointing brickwork. Such measures, undertaken in good time, often help to avoid costly repairs in the future.

