Care before cure

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

Friday 16 October 2026
14.00 - 16.00 CEST

week van het onderhoud 12 - 18 oktober 2026
uit liefde voor ons erfgoed!

Webinar program

14.00 - 14.10: Welcome & Introduction
Sanne de Koning, Director-Manager Monumentenwacht Noord-Brabant, The Netherlands
Viltė Janušauskaitė, Group Lead FIXUS Mobilis, Lithuania

14.10 - 14.30: The importance of maintenance in achieving our sustainability goals
Dr James Ritson, Associate Professor at the 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, Head of the Department of Preventive Monument Maintenance (OPÚP), Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic; Project Manager, Pro Monumenta III.

14.50 - 15.10: Promoting a culture of maintenance in Switzerland
Giacinta Jean, Full Professor of History and Technology of Conservation Restoration at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI).

15.10 - 15.30: Maintenance begins with a clean gutter
Michał Krasucki, Director of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, 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

Associate Professor at the University of the Built Environment, United Kingdom

week van het onderhoud
12 - 18 oktober 2026
uit liefde voor ons erfgoed!

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 Reznik

Head of the Department of Preventive Monument Maintenance (OPÚP), Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic; Project Manager, Pro Monumenta III

week van het onderhoud 12 - 18 oktober 2026
uit liefde voor ons erfgoed!

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

Full professor of History and Technology of Conservation Restoration at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI)

week van het onderhoud 12 - 18 oktober 2026
uit liefde voor ons erfgoed!

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

Michal Krusacki

Director of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, Poland

week van het onderhoud
12 - 18 oktober 2026
uit liefde voor ons erfgoed!

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.