

Annual Forum by



# READY, STEADY, TRANSFORM!

DIGITAL, CULTURAL AND CREATIVE COLLABORATION  
FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE FUTURE

NOVEMBER 20-21, 2025 - PARIS & ONLINE

## KEY TAKEAWAYS



# FOREWORD

## MCA Forum: Finding the red thread – *Ready?*

The MCA Forum is grounded in an open vision of the role of culture, heritage, and digital innovation in shaping sustainable, forward-looking, and inclusive societies, putting education and research at the heart of a democratic Europe open to the world.

Taking place in a context of growing social, political, environmental, and technological polarisation, combined with increasing uncertainty and budgetary pressure on the cultural and digital cultural heritage sectors, the Forum also intends to highlight the many inspiring agents of change there are emerging across Europe.

It focuses on key drivers of progress—cooperation, cross-sector and transversal approaches, openness, and human-centred strategies—as reflected in the Culture Compass publication.

Designed as a collective journey towards the future, this first **Transform Forum** aims to create a space for exchange, shared learning, and the development of new initiatives, while exploring the challenges and opportunities of digital transformation in culture, including accessibility, sustainability, inclusion, and data reuse.

This Forum is centred on two guiding questions - how digital cultural heritage can act as a catalyst for more sustainable and inclusive societies, and how effective cross-sector collaboration can be built. Participants are invited to critically reassess digital cultural practices and share experiences, tools, and visions across the key thematic areas that have been proposed.

Michael Culture Association (MCA)



## Introductory Dialogues: *Steady?*

### Conversing over Inclusion

- **Sophia Alexandersson**, Chief Executive and Artistic Director of ShareMusic & Performing Arts, the Swedish knowledge centre for artistic development and inclusion
- **Stéphane Grosclaude**, Administrator - National Network for Music and Disability

This dialogue between Sophia Alexandersson, and Stéphane Grosclaude, examined inclusion as a broad and evolving concept, encompassing accessibility, gender balance, rights-based approaches, and full participation in cultural life.

The conversation explored how digital transformation, cultural data, and multidisciplinary methods can support the acceleration of inclusive practices in music and cultural heritage. Sophia Alexandersson emphasized co-creation, universal design, and rights-based approaches, highlighting the role of professional inclusive artistic processes. She presented the Music co-creation activities carried in the European project **MuseIT**, which reflects on multisensory access and on what is considered cultural heritage in a digital context. Stéphane Grosclaude focused on skills development, especially for accessibility, community engagement, and knowledge sharing, underlining that inclusion depends on recognizing the capacities of all participants and enabling everyone to both contribute to and benefit from the community. Together, the speakers framed inclusion not as a constraint, but as a driver for artistic innovation and sustainable cultural development.

## 🔍 SOME LINKS TO GO FURTHER :

- The MuseIT Final Event, Technology, Art and Participation in Focus: <https://www.sharemusic.se/resources-and-inspiration/the-museit-final-event-technology-art-and-participation-in-focus>
- The ShareMusic Remote performance platform: <https://www.sharemusic.se/resources-and-inspiration/remote-performance-platform>
- National Network for Music and Disability: <https://www.musique-handicap.fr/>
- European project MuseIT on inclusion: <https://www.muse-it.eu/>
- Inclusive-Music-Makers-Booklet: <https://amp-music.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SEND-Inclusive-Music-Makers-Booklet.pdf>
- "Inclusive Futures: social sustainability trends in Digital Cultural Heritage" - MCA publication



## Conversing over Sustainability

- **Evangelia Paschalidou**, University Aegean, [Chair of the Sustainability Practice Task Force - Climate Action Community of Europeana](#)
- **Vyacheslav Tykhonov**, Head of Interoperability and AI - [Committee on Data of the International Science Council \(CODATA\)](#)

This dialogue between E. Paschalidou and V. Tykhonov aimed at answering the question of how to navigate environmental sustainability in the field of digitization of cultural heritage. While Mrs Paschalidou was bringing more a research perspective and a knowledge on regenerative processes in the field of digitized cultural heritage, Mr Tykhonov showcased the importance of using technology to enhance climate action. Central to this discussion was the topic of communities and their governance of data. The final message was that “*sustainable data*” is data that is curated by communities to answer concrete needs, embedding this principle into its quality, quantity and use.

### 🔍 SOME LINKS TO GO FURTHER :

- Regenerative digital transformation, sustainable pathways for cultural heritage: <https://pro.europeana.eu/post/regenerative-digital-transformation-sustainable-pathways-for-cultural-heritage>
- Environmental sustainability practice Task Force: <https://pro.europeana.eu/project/environmental-sustainability-practice-task-force>
- How data centre expansion risks derailing climate goals: [https://openfuture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/250916How\\_data\\_centre\\_expansion\\_risks\\_derailing\\_climate\\_goals.pdf](https://openfuture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/250916How_data_centre_expansion_risks_derailing_climate_goals.pdf)



## Keynote : Introducing to culture in AI factories

- **Pr. Stefanos Kollias**, Professor Emeritus Division of Computer Science - National Technical University of Athens, Coordinator of the PHAROS AI Factory, Board member of MCA

We are witnessing important new European initiatives on AI and culture, but what are the most promising uses of artificial intelligence in the cultural and creative sectors? What barriers and risks need to be addressed to support the development and implementation of these AI use cases? Stefanos Kollias remind that The Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage, the Cultural Compass for Europe, and other initiatives aim to support a new generation of creators in developing AI skills. This will enable a correct introduction of AI, for example, in the music sector, in cultural heritage restoration, in museum and exhibition curation, in empowering visitors and users creatively, and in the creation of publications and editorial content. Issues related to intellectual property rights, for example, have emerged which is why it is essential not to lose sight of our main objective: an ethical and responsible use of AI. The EU aims to position itself as a leading AI continent. To do so five key pillars are necessary: building large-scale AI computing infrastructure, increasing access to high-quality data, promoting AI in strategic sectors, strengthening AI skills and talent, and simplifying the implementation of the AI Act. Many billions of euros have been made available to create 19 AI factories, 13 AI factory antennas, five AI gigafactories, the AI Apply Facility, and the Cloud & AI Development Act. The Pharos AI Factory is part of this european ecosystem and is leading the language and culture domain. Another instrument, the European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH), supports researchers and small companies in becoming involved in AI development. The European ecosystem of AI factories is being built, based on the Daedalus supercomputer.

### 🔍 SOME LINKS TO GO FURTHER:

- PHAROS AI Factory becomes a regional AI hub for South-Eastern Europe : [https://www.pharos-aifactory.eu/pr\\_mindigitalgr\\_pharosaifactory\\_antennas/](https://www.pharos-aifactory.eu/pr_mindigitalgr_pharosaifactory_antennas/)
- European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH) : <https://european-digital-innovation-hubs.ec.europa.eu/fr/home>
- Greece is building one of the most powerful computing systems in Europe Daedalus : <https://grnet.gr/en/2025/03/26/daedalus-dc-ylopoihs-lavrio/>

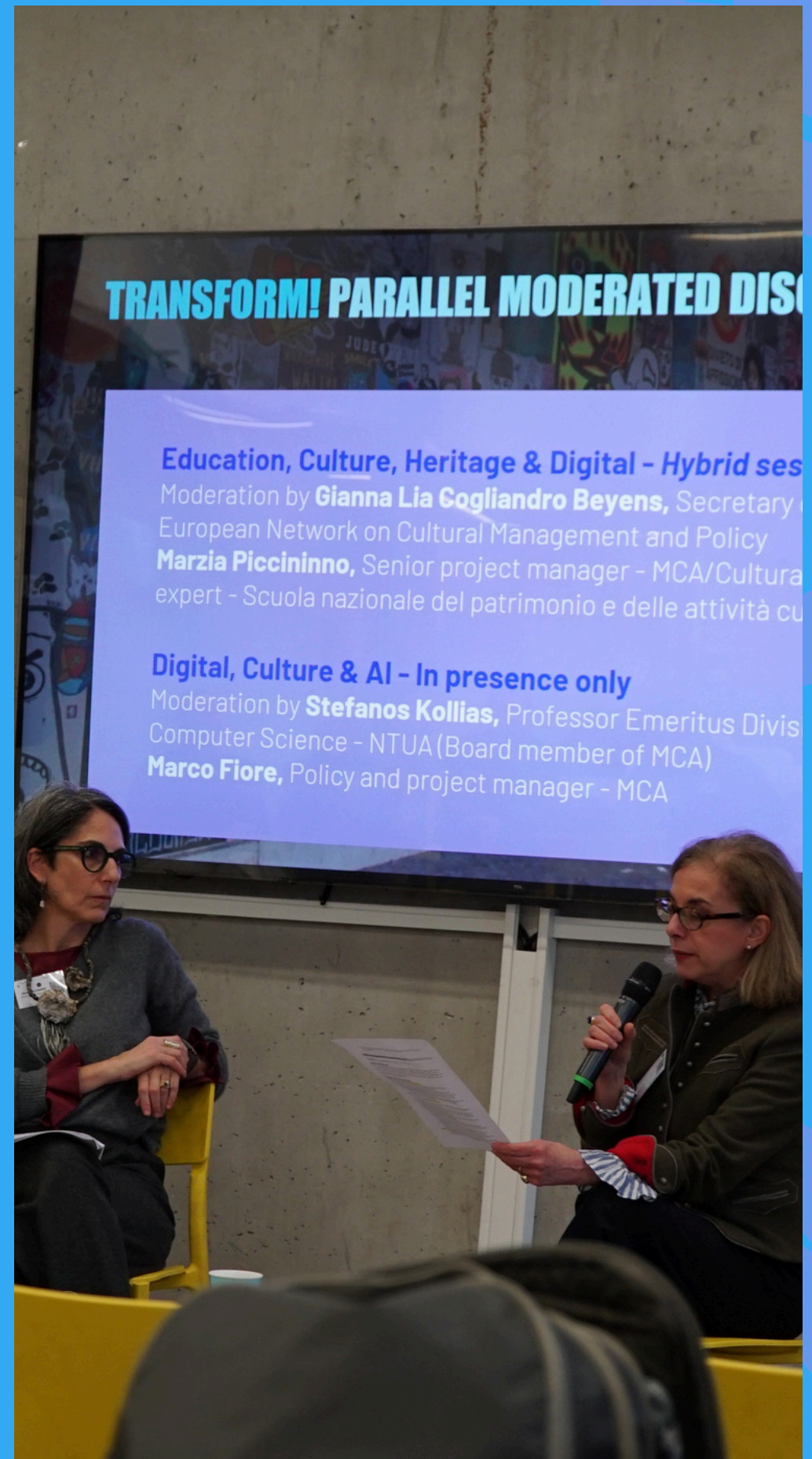


## **Transform! Parallel moderated discussion sessions**

### **Education, Culture, Heritage & Digital**

Moderation by **Gianna Lia Cogliandro Beyens**, Secretary general - [ENCACT](#) & **Marzia Piccininno**, Senior project manager - [MCA/Cultural policy expert](#) - [Scuola nazionale del patrimonio e delle attività culturali](#)

[MCA](#) and [ENCACT](#) presented the [Survey on the Impact of Digital Cultural Content on Democracy and Civic Engagement in Higher Education contexts](#) conducted together in 2025 on the Impact of digital cultural content on democracy and civic engagement in education contexts. Speakers and participants shared and discussed many international experiences in the field. The participants expressed their interest in continuing sharing their inputs in an eventual update of the survey to be carried out in 2026.



### **Digital, Culture & AI**

- Moderation by Stefanos Kollias, Professor Emeritus Division of Computer Science - National Technical University of Athens, Coordinator of the [PHAROS AI Factory](#), [Board member of MCA](#) & Marco Fiore, [Policy and project manager - MCA](#)

This workshop aimed at nourishing the policy position of [MCA in the field of digital & AI policies](#), in view of the future [MFE](#) discussions and the development of the Commission's AI strategy for the Culture and Creative sector. The questions were: What does it mean "ethical" in the digital cultural context? AI strategy for culture at European level: 3 things to take into consideration for you.



### **🔍 SOME LINKS TO GO FURTHER:**

- Action Group on Digital & AI - the Mission Statement: <https://michael-culture.eu/action-group-on-digital-ai-the-mission-statement/31/2024/>

## Panel: Digital Cultural Heritage for Performing Arts

- Moderation by **Marie Véronique Leroi**, Project manager - French Ministry of Culture, Vice-President of Michael Culture, **Marc Hernández Güell**, Founder & CEO - La Tempesta, **Alice Poncet**, Coordinator - Numeridanse, **Anne Le Gall** - Deputy delegate and cofounder - TMN Lab, **Carla Meller** - Academy for Theatre and Digitallity.

The aim of this panel was to create connection between academic Digital Cultural Heritage sectors and the performing art sector. The panel showcased cross sectoral initiatives from performing art sectors and research aiming to show the different connections: digitalised contents and its re-use from valorisation to research as well as DCH for creation.

The main take away of this session is the richness of opportunities for DCH and performing art sectors for cooperation. Following this round table discussion, MCA, TMNlab and Numeridanse plan to continue the discussion in 2026, notably through the potential organisation of a webinar as part of **Transform**, and to support the digitisation, promotion and reuse of live performance content.



### 🔍 SOME LINKS TO GO FURTHER:

- Numeridanse: <https://numeridanse.com/a-propos/qui-sommes-nous/>
- La Tempesta: <https://latempesta.cc/en/>
- TMN Lab: <https://www.tmnlab.com>
- Academy for Theater & Digitallity: <https://theater.digital/en/>

## Workshop series

- **Can AI be an ally for cultural heritage? DE-BIASing digital collections: an interactive workshop**, by **Sofie Taes** - Katholieke Universiteit Leuven & Chair of the Europeana Network Association.

The workshop was animated by Sofie Taes, our partner from the De-Bias project. It was organised in person only and gathered 11 participants (number of participants limited to 10 participants). The session was planned by MCA and KU Leuven as an introductory lesson based on the result of the De-Bias project.



The session included an introduction on the concept and of the AI tool developed, a wheel of *Bias* exercise in breaking groups using datasets, a plenary feedback and Q/A session. The session provided participants with links to the De-Bias toolkit.

The aim of this session was to develop awareness of participants on the topic of *bias* in digital collections, develop capacity on identifying *bias*, and present methodology and tools to deepen this topic after the Forum.

The session has been a high success and the main take away was to develop other webinar or in person sessions to enhance the awareness and the capacity building of CHIs organisations on this topic. To note is the high interest of the young professionals participating in this session.

- **Interactive Workshop on Cultural Data Sharing**, by **Maria Teresa Natale**, Senior project manager, MCA.

The aim of this workshop was to demonstrate that the sharing of digital content is not just a technological challenge, it is an opportunity and a vision. In recent years, many cultural institutions have made their collections available for reuse. GLAMs institutions are following three different models to make their digital content accessible (Direct access through institutional databases; Aggregation of metadata on platforms; Cultural dataspace) responding to different needs: visibility, interoperability, sustainability, rights management, and user participation. Participants shared their visions of data sharing, and collections.

## 🔍 SOME LINKS TO GO FURTHER

- European Data Space for Cultural Heritage <https://www.dataspace-culturalheritage.eu/en>
- 3D-4CH Project: <https://www.3d4ch-competencecentre.eu/>
- CARARE: <https://www.carare.eu/it/>
- MCA's study on Digital Maturity of GLAMs: <https://michael-culture.eu/mca-library/digital-maturity-of-glams/>

## Projects Fair: pioneering projects and digital solutions for heritage

A two hours demonstration fair was organised to present some pioneering tools developed by members and partners of MCA. In particular, six technological tools were presented to participants (in presence only)

- Haptic technologies developed within the **MuselT project**, presented by the **University of Borås**.
- Knowledge graphs and transformative innovation for cultural heritage, presented by **La Tempesta**.
- Remote site monitoring to prevent looting in archaeological sites, presented by **Iconem**.
- Digital storytelling project in the **Rosa Parks** area in Paris, presented by **Dédale**.
- Digitisation of musical videos project, presented by **Philharmonie de Paris**.
- Animated storytelling, presented by **GoTellGo**.



## Afternoon: Policy, Cooperation & Funding Insights

### – Culture, Digital & Research Policies: What Lies Ahead

Moderation by **Corinne Szteinszneider**, Coordinator of MCA

Introductory keynote: **Marco Fiore**, MCA

- **Susanne Hollmann**, Senior Expert, Strategic policy development and **Maria Iglesias**, team leader Cultural Policy Unit, DG EAC - European Commission,
- **Lars Ebert**, Secretary General - Culture Action Europe,
- **Marie-Véronique Leroi**, French Ministry of Culture,
- **Giuliana De Francesco**, Policy officer - DG RTD - European Commission

The aim of this session was to inform, clarify, question, exchange.

MCA delivered a keynote presenting the European context and main challenges for DCH communities and beyond, as well as the statements and contributions delivered by MCA (statements, contribution to stakeholders discussions, EC-expert group, MCA-CAE working group on digital and AI etc...).

Given the recent publication of the **Culture Compass**, we were able to focus the session on its presentation by the DGEAC and its mainstreaming in other DGs representatives as well as inviting Culture Action Europe - as representatives of civil society to share its perspective on it. During the session, the DGEAC detailed as well how it supports digital cultural heritage. The last part was focusing on the next MFF.

The main take away from this session beyond the richness of the information was the strong welcome of the Culture Compass form the participants and the questioning about its mainstream in the coming MFF and programmes.

### 🔍 SOME LINKS TO GO FURTHER

- MCA with MEPs – Discussing MFF for the cultural sector : <https://michael-culture.eu/mca-with-meps-discussing-mff-for-the-cultural-sector/24/2025/>
- The EU Culture Compass: what it means for Digital Culture & Heritage : <https://michael-culture.eu/the-eu-culture-compass-what-it-means-for-digital-culture-heritage/14/2025/>



**Digital for the Fight Against Trafficking of Cultural Heritage: the ANCHISE project perspective.** Moderation by **Marco Fiore**, MCA

- Hélène Ventimiglia**, Coordinator in the Heritage Protection Department - ICOM
- Benjamin Omer**, Scientific Project officer - Ecole française d'Athènes
- Axel Kerep**, Project Manager - PARCS Solutions.

The panel featuring voices of the ANCHISE partners explored how interdisciplinary collaboration is essential to fight cultural heritage trafficking. Drawing on the ANCHISE project's field demonstrations, speakers emphasized that technological tools only succeed when co-developed with users—museums, law enforcement, and researchers and supported by legal, institutional, and financial frameworks. Discussions highlighted both the potential and risks of digitalization: while image recognition and online monitoring tools can trace illicit trade, digitized collections remain incomplete, underfunded, and vulnerable to misuse. The session concluded with a shared call for a European Competence Centre for Heritage Protection to sustain tools, coordinate efforts, harmonize laws, and ensure long-term, cross-sector cooperation beyond project cycles.

**SOME LINKS TO GO FURTHER**

- ANCHISE project website : <https://www.anchise.eu/>
- ANCHISE YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@anchiseproject/playlists>



## Cooperation and Funding Opportunities for Digital Transformation

Moderation by Pier Giacomo Sola, MCA

- Fabienne Trotte**, Research & Innovation Manager - Relais Culture Europe
- Carolina Gutiérrez Ruiz** - Horizon Europe Cluster 2 National Contact Point

The aim of this session was to provide an overview of the ongoing negotiations for the next **Multiannual Financial Framework**, as well as upcoming European funding opportunities expected from 2026 onwards. Particular attention was given to forthcoming calls related to the DCH sector and to potential collaborations between DCH and other cultural and creative sectors.

Relais Culture Europe, the French Contact Point for Creative Europe, presented the Creative Europe, Erasmus+ and CERV programmes. The French National Contact Point for Horizon Europe - Cluster 2 also introduced the coming opportunities.

This overview of the wide range of EU funding opportunities was especially valuable, as participants came from diverse sectors and were not necessarily familiar with the full funding landscape.




### 🔍 SOME LINKS TO GO FURTHER

- Horizon Europe Cluster 2 National Contact Point : <https://www.horizon-europe.gouv.fr/le-point-de-contact-national-du-cluster-2-shs-28181>



## Let's keep in touch!

<https://michael-culture.eu/>

-  [contact@michael-culture.eu](mailto:contact@michael-culture.eu)
-  Michael Culture Association
-  [@michaelcultureasso.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/michaelcultureasso.bsky.social)

[Subscribe to Michael Culture Newsletter & Join us](#)



This report was published in February 2026 under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (CC BY).



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.