

## Preserving the Past: the Role of Science Diplomacy in Cultural Heritage Protection

Date and time: Thursday, 26 September, 16:30 – 18:30 (followed by a networking reception)

Venue: Brussels School of Governance, Lisbon Room (floor – 1), Bd de la Plaine 5, 1050 Ixelles

### Overview

Cultural heritage, encompassing both tangible artifacts and intangible traditions, is a cornerstone of human identity and historical continuity. However, it faces unprecedented threats from many angles: natural disasters, climate change, armed conflicts, urban development, and illicit trafficking to name a few. From the degeneration of the Great Barrier Reef, to the disastrous effects of war on the ancient city of Palmyra, our collective cultural heritage faces a precarious future. Science diplomacy, which combines scientific knowledge with diplomatic efforts, offers a powerful approach to mitigate these threats and ensure the protection and preservation of cultural heritage worldwide. It holds promise to play a pivotal role in many ways, such as by fostering research collaborations, building capacity, shaping policy, and providing crisis response.

This panel will delve into the multifaceted role of science diplomacy in cultural heritage protection. It will highlight successful case studies where international scientific cooperation has made significant strides in preserving heritage sites and artifacts. The discussion will also address the challenges and opportunities that arise when science intersects with diplomatic endeavors in the realm of cultural heritage.

Guiding Questions for the Panel:

- How can international scientific collaborations enhance the protection and preservation of cultural heritage?
- What strategies can be employed to overcome the geopolitical challenges in heritage conservation efforts?
- In what ways can science diplomacy contribute to creating robust international policies for cultural heritage protection?
- How can we balance the need for local engagement with global scientific and diplomatic efforts in heritage preservation?
- What role does science diplomacy play in raising public awareness and fostering community involvement in cultural heritage protection?
- What are the diplomatic dimensions of museum collections, and how can they influence international relations?

This discussion is expected to increase the awareness of the role of science diplomacy in cultural heritage preservation, highlight the need for enhanced collaboration between stakeholders, and showcase different strategies that can be emulated to ensure our past is also our future.

### Programme

16:30 – 16:35 Welcoming Words, Florian Trauner, Dean of the Brussels School of Governance

- 16:35 – 16:40 Introductory Remarks, Eric Piaget, EUTOPIA Science Diplomacy Coordinator
- 16:40 – 16:50 Keynote Speech by H.E. Amna Baloch, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan (tbc)
- 16:50 – 17:50 Panel Discussion
- 17:50 – 18:00 Film Excerpt Showing: “Petrified” by Ali Cherri
- 18:00 – 18:30 Q&A
- 18:30 – 19:30 Networking Reception

## Panel

Moderated by Dr. Chritina Hainzl, Head of Research Lab Democracy and Society in Transition at University for Continuing Education Krems

- Oriol Freixa Matalonga, Liaison Officer for Culture, UNESCO
- Alfio Gullotta, Policy Officer - Cultural Heritage, European External Action Service
- Dr. Jermina Stanojev, European Heritage Hub
- Prof. em. Koenraad Van Balen, KU Leuven, Council member of Europa Nostra

## About the EUTOPIA Science Diplomacy Seminars

EUTOPIA recognizes the important role that universities play in science diplomacy, which is why it has a work package dedicated to fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange in this field. The EUTOPIA Science Diplomacy Seminars are a cornerstone of this effort, serving as learning platforms to better understand the dynamics of this rapidly evolving and increasingly important field.

For any questions, kindly direct them to [eric.piaget@vub.be](mailto:eric.piaget@vub.be)