

SAVE THE UKRAINE MONUMENTS



Besides the unacceptable losses of human lives and the distress of the population which is causing millions of refugees, the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops and the ongoing war put at risk the cultural heritage of this country. They may irreparably destroy monuments, artworks, remnants of the past, and with them witnesses of the history and cultural identity of an entire nation are lost. Out of solidarity with Ukraine, immediately after the invasion the 4CH European project

(<https://www.4ch-project.eu/>), led by the INFN Italian National Institute for Nuclear Physics, launched an initiative to save the digital documentation of Ukrainian cultural heritage, to preserve its memory and support the future restoration of assets from the damages caused by the war.

“In this dramatic situation - explains Francesco Taccetti, coordinator of 4CH - the European projects and institutes working in the cultural heritage sector have come together to form a rescue network for Ukrainian cultural heritage starting from digital libraries, demonstrating a consistency and unity of purpose that lay the foundations for a common future”.

The 4CH initiative, titled SUM – Save the Ukraine Monuments (<https://www.4ch-project.eu/sum/>), was heartily approved by the European Commission and saw the immediate and active collaboration and commitment of the Centre for Contemporary and Digital History at the University of Luxembourg, the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and the Poznan Supercomputing and Networking Center. Contacts were rapidly established with Ukrainian authorities, heritage institutions and professionals, and private companies to duplicate all the digital documents locally available on safe servers in the EU, to preserve them and return them to the legitimate owners when – hopefully soon – peace will be re-established in Ukraine.

Numerous international organizations endorsed SUM, notably Europeana, OPERAS and the EOSC Association.

INFN, the 4CH coordinator, the Poznan Supercomputing and Networking Center, and the University of Luxembourg set up the necessary digital storage provisions and a procedure for the data transfer, which at present takes place via the Internet but may be also carried out via portable hard drives, if needed. The digital documentation, transferred safely, is currently stored at such institutions in duplicate identical copies to guarantee its safe preservation.. At present, contacts are active with a number of Ukrainian institutions, organizations and individuals and a large number of data have already been duplicated in the EU.

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