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The Toledo International Platform on Cultural Heritage and conflict resolution

Factum Foundation welcomes the adoption of the EU Concept on Cultural Heritage in crisis and conflict, an important step in a new holistic approach in mediation and conflict resolution. In a far-reaching move, the European Commission and all the partners in this initiative, are spearheading an important shift in the way we value and share cultural and historical heritage. Over the last decades, culture has been promoted to attract tourism and has been associated with leisure, neglecting its potential as a transformational instrument that can not only create local economies but also heal the emotional and physical damage resulting from violence and conflict.

Stakeholders working with cultural heritage, political negotiation and peace-building have welcomed the initiative presented in November 2020 by Spain's Ambassador-at-large for Mediation and Intercultural Dialogue at the EEAS/UNESCO Conference. An international conference will be held at the end of September in Toledo to launch an international platform that will promote projects in the fields of cultural heritage and conflict resolution, supported by the Junta de Castilla la Mancha and other regional institutions as well as the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Factum Foundation is proud to join the [Centro Internacional Toledo para la Paz \(CITpax\)](#) and other international partners in this ambitious initiative. We believe that the inclusion of Cultural Heritage recording as a tool in conflict resolution represents a significant change in the European Union's approach to the function and value of cultural heritage. It can become a key instrument in the quest for conflict prevention and resolution, as stated in the Council Conclusions adopted on 7th December 2020.

The **Toledo Conference** will be held to discuss and promote the European Union's new policy on heritage documentation as part of conflict resolution and demonstrate how cultural heritage can be a valuable tool, not only to change attitudes between actors in conflicts, shifting the emotional religious and intellectual emphasis, but also enabling mediators and practitioners to achieve more efficient and measurable results.

Transferring skills and technology, one of Factum Foundation's core missions, places the emphasis on local responsibility and brings with it new skills and new types of employment. Digitising the materiality of tangible heritage and the ephemeral nature of intangible heritage is fundamental to preserve culture and enable it to be shared in diverse forms, stimulating interest and building bridges between different groups and communities. The training and the transfer of both skills and technologies to local communities can become a peace-building tool, assisting preservation, creating a local economy and sharing narratives with a global audience.

The support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Junta de Castilla La Mancha, Diputación Provincial, Ayuntamiento de Toledo and Universidad de Castilla La Mancha demonstrate the clear commitment of Spanish institutions to make the **Toledo Network** an international hub for public and private organisations, to work together and acknowledge the importance of culture as a direct means of communication that can help establish dialogue and understand difference, of which Toledo is a powerful symbol. Factum Foundation hopes that this is the beginning of a new role that the European Commission and its Member States can play in preserving our heritage by giving it a deeper and more relevant role within a wider political agenda – to enhance communication and share knowledge.

For any inquiries, please contact

Nicolas Béliard – nicolas.beliard@factum-arte.com