

Eight new projects at the use case phase the ECCCH

*(Collaborative Cloud for Cultural
Heritage)*

A European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage - Innovative uses cases

On 15 September 2026, in Brussels, the European Commission convened the coordinators of the new projects selected under the call HORIZON-CL2-2025-01-HERITAGE-03, dedicated to innovative use cases for the European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage (ECCCH). The Coordinators' Day, opened by Maria Claudia Bodino DG Research and Innovation, European Commission, marked a turning point: the programme's focus is shifting from architecture and tool design towards real-world validation. The ECHOES project, coordinated by Xavier Rodier (CNRS), serves as the backbone of the ecosystem, having established the foundations, governance, data model, ontologies and basic cloud components on which the eight sister projects will deploy their use cases.

The ECCCH was conceived in three successive phases: infrastructure and governance, innovative tools, and finally real-world use cases. With an overall budget of approximately €110 million, the ecosystem now encompasses 22 projects, 36 countries and 322 partners, with full implementation targeted for 2029. Participating institutions range from large national museums to small NGOs, universities and technology SMEs, integrated through three levels of integration: catalogue federation, adoption of the Heritage Digital Twin Ontology (HDTO), and the Digital Commons strategy.

1. Interoperability and integration with the ECCCH

The adoption of open standards is a cross-cutting priority. HERITWIN applies CIDOC-CRM, EDM, DCAT-AP, IIIF and FAIR principles to connect fragmented data into actionable digital twins. MNEME harmonises texts, images and 3D models through CIDOC-CRM and IIIF, and extends ECHOES tools (CIT, VTL, OCRA) with AI assistance and robotic 3D capture. CULTUR.ACT validates interoperability between the ECCCH and the Data Space for Cultural Heritage (DS4CH), with tools such as MINT and DE-BIAS, across 14 use cases in eight living labs. POLARIS integrates pilots at the British Library, the Malatestiana Library and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), with FAIR data and AI enrichment as core principles.



2. AI, immersive technologies and digital twins

NARRATIA explores curator-controlled generative storytelling to create immersive experiences across six pilots, combining cloud AI and edge processing for low-connectivity sites. AVCloud focuses on audiovisual heritage, integrating 15 real-life use cases from film and sound archives, with emphasis on metadata enrichment and reduced dependence on costly hardware. HERITWIN transforms dispersed data into digital twins that serve as decision instruments for conservation, risk management and emergency planning.

3. Inclusion, memory and community participation

Re-Memorizing EU_WWII reconnects nine urban sites shaped by World War II and totalitarian regimes across eight European countries, transforming archives and testimonies into interoperable resources and immersive experiences. WALKING MEMORY empowers displaced and diaspora communities (Pontic Greeks and Cypriots) to capture, geolocate and semantically enrich their own oral histories using AI and XR technologies, channelling them directly into the ECCCH through dedicated APIs. POLARIS positions libraries as active contributors to the ecosystem, not merely users, through training, mentoring and two open calls for library-led projects.

4. Open science, governance and sustainability

All projects share a commitment to open-source development, capacity building and policy feedback. ECHOES has established governance mechanisms such as the Stakeholders Council and the Integration Taskforce, whose next meeting was announced for November 2026. Projects will deliver FAIR datasets, reusable pipelines, adoption playbooks and joint policy briefs. The clustering strategy proposed by HERITWIN, one shared test plan, one common evidence template and one joint policy brief, reflects the collaborative ethos of the ecosystem.

Together, the eight projects will test whether the ECCCH can become an operational, inclusive and interoperable infrastructure for Europe's cultural heritage. The answer will depend on the ability of all actors to share validation metrics, cross-validate tools and build an adoption community that extends beyond the projects' duration.

Source: ECCCH Coordinators' Day presentations, 15 September 2026, Brussels.

