

E-RIHS in a nutshell

Mission

Tangible cultural and natural heritage are key components of the European identity. The study and preservation of cultural and natural heritage is a global challenge for science and the European society at large. The European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science (E-RIHS) supports research on heritage interpretation, preservation, documentation and management. State-of-the-art tools and services will be provided by cross-disciplinary groups of researchers to cross-disciplinary users and scientific communities working to advance knowledge about heritage and to devise innovative strategies for its preservation. E-RIHS connects researchers in the humanities and natural sciences and fosters a trans-disciplinary culture of exchange and cooperation. E-RIHS pursues the integration of European world-class facilities to create a cohesive entity playing a connecting role in the global community of heritage science.

Past and future

Fragmentation, duplication of efforts, isolation of small research groups put at risks the competitive advantage of European heritage science research, spearheaded so well in the past by its unique cultural heritage. The long-term tradition of this field of research, the ability to combine with innovation, and the integration promoted by EU-funded projects such as [EU-ARTECH](#), CHARISMA and [IPERION CH](#) in conservation science, and [ARIADNE](#) in archaeology represent the background of E-RIHS. E-RIHS exploits the synergy of the cooperation among the academy, research centers and cultural institutions. Both the scientific and the socio-economic importance connected with heritage science are nowadays evident. The research community has achieved the maturity necessary to make the leap towards a permanent European research infrastructure that will impact broadly on society and economy.

Structure

E-RIHS is a pan-European distributed infrastructure supported by 13 Member States – potential founders of the E-RIHS consortium – and participated by six more EU and associated countries. E-RIHS star-design structure has its central hub and headquarters



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in Florence (IT) and comprises national hubs – possibly organised in regional hubs in some countries – encompassing specialised knowledge, fixed and mobile national facilities of recognized excellence, physically accessible collections/archives and remotely accessible heritage data.

Global dimension

The global lead that the EU holds in this research field, supported today by an unstable combination of national and EU measures, requires a joint and resolved effort. The proposal for establishing a GRI [Global Research Infrastructure] based on the E-RIHS partnership was submitted to the GSO in 2014. An international initiative will be carried on in parallel with the preparatory phase of E-RIHS for connecting and including partners and facilities outside EU, gradually reaching the status of a global distributed research infrastructure of which E-RIHS could be the leading partner. The intergovernmental organization ICCROM is supporting the initiative and is committed to help setting up the future legal entity of the global infrastructure.



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