

World's Cultural Heritage new ally: E-RIHS

*The European Commission, under its research and innovation program H2020, has recently approved the financing of a 4 million Euros project for initiating a three-years preparatory phase for the implementation of the **Pan-European research infrastructure for Heritage Sciences – E-RIHS**. Coordinated by the Italian National Council of Research, the infrastructure unites the scientific expertise and laboratory infrastructures of main institutions across 15 European Union countries and Israel. The Cyprus Institute, representing Cyprus in this ambitious endeavor, is the E-RIHS regional hub for the Eastern Mediterranean.*

The European Commission has approved to allocate ca. 4 million Euros to the launch of the preparatory phase for the establishment of E-RIHS - the Pan European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Sciences. **E-RIHS PP—European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science Preparatory Phase**, is funded through the program for research and innovation H2020 - INFRADEV-2016-2017 (Development and long-term sustainability of new pan-European research infrastructures). Led by The Italian National Council of Research, the consortium includes representatives of 15 European Union countries and Israel. ICCROM, the International Center for the study and restoration of cultural property, from its seat in Rome, Italy, takes an active role in E-RIHS by extending the infrastructure to reach countries outside the European Union, with a long-term vision to turn E-RIHS into a true global research infrastructure.

Cyprus is represented by The Cyprus Institute and its Science and Technology for Archaeological Research Center, devoted to the study of Cultural Heritage through analytical and digital methods such as non-invasive chemical-physical diagnostics of works of art, 3D documentation of heritage assets and development of digital libraries for knowledge management. Due to its strategic location and scientific collaborative network, The Cyprus Institute represents an E-RIHS regional hub for the Eastern Mediterranean.

E-RIHS PP brings together researchers and scientists from the humanities, formal sciences and natural sciences, such as art historians, archaeologists, paleo-anthropologists, restorers, curators, computer scientists, chemists and physicists (to mention a few), who unite their effort to develop together the new discipline of **Heritage Science**. The main scope of E-RIHS PP is to establish a single research infrastructure, with laboratories and research units distributed across Europe, aggregated in national nodes and regional hubs, which offers knowledge expertise and use of state-of-the-art instrumentation, innovative investigation methodologies and access to scientific data. Such an infrastructure is grouped in four main platforms: a mobile infrastructure (Molab), including portable instrumentation for *in – situ* (on the spot) non-invasive and non-destructive analyses, suitable for the investigation of archaeological sites, monuments or non-movable museum assets, a fixed infrastructure (Fixlab), consisting of large-scale instrumentation, such as synchrotrons, accelerators and so on, archives of data (Archlab), containing valuable and unique information hosted in museums, galleries and research institutes, and **Digilab**, for providing direct access to scientific data and information stored in databases, digital libraries and knowledge repositories.

The operative phase of E-RIHS PP will start January 2017 and will last for three years, during which operational aspects of the infrastructure will be established, such its governance, economic and sustainability plans, regulations, policies, training needs and logistics and above all the legal and operative steps needed for the creation of the European research infrastructure consortium (ERIC), in coordination with the involved countries and under the leadership of Italy. With support from the Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze and the patronages of Regione Toscana and Florence municipality and under the guidance of CNR, the European candidate to host the legal and operative seat of E-RIHS is the city of Florence.

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