

# Call for Conference

## Intangible Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis: Transformations, Risks, and Governance, 17-18 September 2026

**COST Action CA24125 – CRICULT**, Working Group 4 (WG4)

**Hosted by:** European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany  
CHAIR FOR HERITAGE STUDIES & Collegium Polonicum

**Venue:** Collegium Polonicum, Ślubice

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### Conference Overview

The COST Action **CRICULT (CA24125)** invites contributions to an international conference dedicated to the role of **intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in times of crisis and its impact on tangible heritage**.

Cultural heritage is increasingly affected by a wide range of crises, including climate change, armed conflict, forced migration, political instability, and rapid socio-economic transformation. While much attention has been devoted to the protection of tangible heritage, the **loss, transformation, and instrumentalisation of intangible heritage**—including traditions, languages, rituals, and knowledge systems—remain underexplored, despite their fundamental role in shaping cultural identity and sustaining material heritage. Within CRICULT, **Working Group 4 (WG4)** focuses on the **crisis of intangible heritage**, emphasizing how the erosion of cultural practices and knowledge systems can directly impact the preservation, meaning, and continuity of physical heritage environments.

A **special focus of this conference will be on Intangible Religious Heritage**, addressing the specific challenges arising at the intersection of religious practices, legal frameworks, spatial environments, and processes of secularisation, transformation, and politicisation. To complement the academic discussions on Intangible Religious Heritage, a **research trip to Neuzelle Abbey** will be organized, offering participants the opportunity to engage directly with a significant site where intangible religious practices and tangible heritage are deeply interconnected.

This conference aims to bring together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to explore how crises affect intangible heritage and to contribute to the development of **interdisciplinary frameworks and policy-oriented solutions**, in line with CRICULT's objective of building **crisis and solution matrices** for cultural heritage protection.

### Themes and Research Questions

We welcome contributions addressing the following themes:

#### 1) Conceptual and Bottom-up Approaches

- How is **intangible cultural heritage transformed** in contexts of crisis and rapid change?
- What is the relationship between intangible heritage and:
  - identity formation
  - community practices
  - spatial and material environments?
- How can intangible heritage be:
  - **mapped**, documented, and transmitted?
  - analysed through participatory, digital, or interdisciplinary methodologies?

#### 2) Policy, Legal, and Governance Perspectives

- How is intangible heritage **regulated, recognised, and protected** across different legal and policy frameworks?



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- Where are the **gaps and limitations** in current governance systems?
- What risks arise from:
  - politicisation of heritage
  - folklorisation and commodification
  - institutional fragmentation and policy incoherence?

### 3) Cross-cutting Issues

- The impact of **intangible heritage loss on tangible heritage**
- Intangible **religious heritage** and its governance challenges
- Digitalisation and the transformation of heritage practices
- Climate change, conflict, and forced migration
- Community-based safeguarding and participatory governance
- Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to heritage in crisis

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**Conference Format:** Hybrid

**Conference Language:** English

The conference will include:

- **Invited speakers** from WG4
- **Selected oral presentations**
- A **poster session** for additional contributions

Applicants who are not selected for oral presentations will have the opportunity to **present their work in the poster session**, ensuring broad participation and exchange.

## Submission Guidelines

Please submit:

- An **abstract** (max. 150 words)
- A short **biographical note** (max. 100 words)

**Deadline:** Propose an abstract by **20 May 2026** to the following email: [cricult@europa-uni.de](mailto:cricult@europa-uni.de)

Submissions will be evaluated based on:

- relevance to the conference themes
- originality and methodological clarity
- potential contribution to WG4 CRICULT's research objectives

## Participation and Outcomes

Selected contributions may be considered for:

- inclusion in **conference proceedings**
- development into **joint publications** (e.g. special issue or edited volume)
- integration into CRICULT's **research and policy outputs**

Results of evaluation: **15 June 2026**

## Contacts

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