

MANIFESTO

EUROPEAN RAILWAY MUSEUMS UNITE TO FACE A NEW PERIOD

In view of the impact of Covid-19, the cultural world has to seek new ways of interacting with society in this new period. Museums are a key element in order to attain such goals. Scientific evidence shows that museum visits have preventative and therapeutic effects. This is highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO), which has confirmed that participating in artistic and cultural activities promotes physical and mental well-being.

Undoubtedly, in the following months we are going to need safe, healthy spaces in order to facilitate the return of public activities, and railway museums would like to play a role therein, especially the ones in Europe, the cradle of this mode of transport. The spaciousness of railway museums (housed in old railway facilities such as stations, workshops and steam depots), which sometimes feature open spaces, makes it easier to avoid overcrowding and respect the recommended social distancing.

Therefore, at this critical time, the managers of European railway museums, aware of the social role played by their institutions, and that they share the same challenges and objectives posed by this temporary context of having to live with Covid-19, would like to contribute their unique facilities to this common goal of recovery and declare their interest in:

- Promoting alliances and establishing joint museum action strategies that enable us to reflect on their present and future as public spheres of civic service, custodians of a common heritage, as well as vehicles that convey the outstanding role of this mode of transport.
- Contributing to the recovery of cultural activities in Europe and helping citizens to continue trusting in the use of the railway as the healthiest, safest and most environmentally friendly mode of public transport, and the one that is best able to adapt to contingencies such as the ones we have experienced.
- Using museums as a way of helping to overcome the pandemic's physical and psychological impact on society, offering the spaciousness of their unique facilities, devoted to rail travel, to provide the therapeutic effect highlighted by the WHO, generating the necessary atmosphere of peace and quiet.
- Promoting more than ever the use of digital tools, in order to make even clearer the social and educational role played by railway museums and their contribution to the conservation and dissemination of their cultural legacy.
- Stimulating creativity in order to attract visitors and thereby restore citizen trust and safety in our museums, always taking into account the health authorities' recommendations at any given time.
- Programming activities in collaboration with local, regional and state government authorities, as well as railway companies, aimed at, among other goals, recognising the work carried out during this crisis by healthcare and emergency personnel, security forces and all essential workers that have laboured tirelessly throughout the pandemic's most critical moments, including railway workers.

May 18, 2020

International Museum Day

List of museums, institutions and associations adhered:

Museums:

Asturias Railway Museum
Athens Railway Museum
Basque Railway Museum
Catalonia Railway Museum
DB Museum (Germany)
Hungarian Railway Museum
Latvian Railway History Museum
London Transport Museum
Madrid Railway Museum
National Railway Museum (Italy)
National Railway Museum (Portugal)
National Railway Museum (United Kingdom)
Norwegian Railway Museum
Postal Museum (Czech Republic)
Postal Museum (Finland)
Russian Railways Museum
Het Spoorwegmuseum / Dutch Railway Museum (The Netherlands)
Swedish Railway Museum / Swedish National Maritime and Transport Museums
Train World, National Railway Museum of Belgium
Verkehrshaus / Swiss Transport Museum
The Workshops Rail Museum (Australia)

Institutions:

Ingenium Foundation (Canada)
Italian State Railways Foundation
National Railway Museum Foundation (Portugal)
SNCF, Heritage & Patronage (France)
Spanish Railways Foundation

Associations:

Iberian Railway History Association
International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic & Mobility (T2M)
International Association of Transports and Communications Museums (IATM)
International Railway History Association (IRHA)