



Manifesto for Archaeology Professionals and its Recognition in Europe

Preventive archaeology is one of the most effective tools for the protection of cultural heritage in Europe. Its objective is to anticipate, assess, and mitigate the impacts that human activities—mainly those derived from public works, urbanization, and territorial development—may have on archaeological remains. Far from being an obstacle, this practice is an opportunity to integrate the past into the planning of the present and the future, ensuring that collective memory is preserved and transmitted to future generations.

The consolidation of this professional practice was supported by the implementation of European heritage and environmental conservation policies since the 1970s and was legally formalized in the ***European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992)***. More recently, the ***Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro, 2005)*** strengthened the social and participatory dimension of heritage, posing new challenges for its management.

However, despite this legislative support and the undoubted importance of preventive archaeology, its practice in Europe remains marked by **job insecurity, precarious working conditions, incohesive legislation, and a lack of social recognition**.

Despite being highly qualified professionals, the archaeological sector faces temporary contracts, low salaries, forced mobility, a lack of full occupational health and safety guarantees, and increasing pressure stemming from the structural dependence on the construction sector. Too often, archaeology is perceived as a formality or a hindrance to development, when it really is an investment in sustainability, identity and social cohesion.

Faced with this situation, we demand:

- **Professional recognition:** Preventive archaeology must be consolidated as an essential activity of public interest, with common standards of training, practice, health and safety and ethics across Europe.
- **Comprehensive measures:** Archaeology involves many activities beyond fieldwork that are essential for the full completion of our scientific duty. A comprehensive idea of the archaeological process needs to be recognised and secured to enhance access and knowledge.
- **Employment guarantees:** decent, stable, and safe working conditions, as well as fair salaries commensurate with the level of responsibility of

archaeology professionals enabling all workers in the sector to live with dignity.

- **European legislative harmonization:** a common framework that ensures the real and effective implementation of the Valletta Convention (1992) and the Faro Convention (2005) in all Member States, regardless of national specificities.
- **Social recognition and citizen participation:** policies that make visible that preventive archaeology is not an obstacle, but an added value that enriches the present and strengthens the common European future. Furthermore, to ensure access to archaeological knowledge and the means to make it possible.

This manifesto calls on **European institutions, national and regional administrations, professional associations, and citizens** to a firm commitment: to place preventive archaeology in its rightful place, as a cultural right, a public responsibility, and a worthy professional field.

Only through comprehensive recognition—professional, labour, legislative, and social—can we ensure that preventive archaeology fully fulfils its function: **protecting the past so that Europe's future is built on more just, sustainable, and historically conscious foundations.**

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Confederazioni Italiana Archaeologi (Italy)

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