



NACE Codes for Cultural Heritage activities

The current NACE Framework classifies cultural activities within Section "R – Arts, Entertainment and Recreation". This section encompasses heritage activities which are grouped in Division 91 and are identified as: "Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities", including "operation of historical sites and buildings and similar visitor attractions"¹.

Simply put: this classification is narrow and anachronistic. It does not reflect our current understanding of heritage which is comprehensively described in the Council of Europe's Faro Convention² and is the basis for subsequent European policies and recommendations.

Outcomes arising from the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018³, clearly demonstrate that it is no longer tenable to identify heritage with fixed assets and places (libraries, museums and historical sites). Heritage is now recognised as a living entity shaped by socio-cultural values, beliefs and priorities, conceived at the personal, local, national and European level.

In order to have countable economic contribution and statistical results of conservation-restoration, it must be recognised in the NACE Codes. These data will also enhance visibility and relevance of the profession. But it is not only about conservation-restoration; we are proposing formal recognition of the entire heritage sector.

The proposed range of economic activities in heritage, within a restructured NACE, describe a range of actions (economic activities) aimed at a group of resources (heritage). These actions are united by the same purpose, namely; the caring and valuing of heritage for sustainable development, contributing to the quality of life in a constantly evolving society. Consequently, any economic activity in the realm of cultural heritage must necessarily be governed by cultural and humanistic values, guaranteeing the creation of new knowledge and the preservation of heritage for the benefit of society today and in the future.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5902521/KS-RA-07-015-EN.PDF>

² <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680083746>

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2019/EN/COM-2019-548-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

Key Points:

- As a classification of economic activity, the NACE codes currently do not capture the full spectrum of economic capital generated by the heritage sector.
- Because of the specificity of its role in society and the nature of the activities associated with it, cultural heritage must be recognised as a discrete sector, in the “creative and cultural industries” (CCs).
- Heritage activities cannot be classified with industrial, commercial or manufacturing activities.

Proposal:

- All heritage activities, existing and emerging should be identified and classified as a distinct division in the NACE Codes.

On Conservation-restoration in NACE

The professional activity of conservation-restoration simply does not exist in the NACE Codes. Where restoration is referenced, it is misleadingly classified as a creative, artistic or craft activity. More concerning still, recognized de-facto specialist areas of conservation-restoration are dispersed among activities of repairing, manufacturing, building or artistic creation. These anomalies in the classification of activities associated with heritage and its care reveal an outdated classification system for the sector, obliging conservator-restorers to register in NACE codes such as:

- Division 33.19: Restoration of organs and other historical musical instruments is included with the repair of fishing nets, fertilizer and chemical storage bags, wooden pallets, shipping drums or barrels, pinball machines and other coin-operated games.
- Division 90.03 (artistic creation): The restoration of works of art (paintings) is included with the work of sculptors, painters, cartoonists, fictional writers or independent journalists.
- Division 91.02 (museum activities): The restoration of works of art and museums’ collections, considered an artistic activity, is therefore not included in this Division.
- Division 91.03 (operation of historical sites and buildings and similar visitor attractions): The renovation and restoration of historical sites and buildings is classified under Section F – Construction: Division 43 “Specialised construction activities” or in Class 41.20: “The construction of residential and non-residential buildings” that includes remodelling and renovating existing residential structures such as historical city centres’ households.⁴

⁴ During the post-Covid-19 pandemic, some E.C.C.O. members’ conducted surveys on its impact on the Conservator-restorer activity. Although it is still a work in progress, first results have shown the disperse and inaccurate codes used by the conservation-restoration activity such as:

95.25: Repair of watches, clocks, jewellery, books and musical instruments,

95.24: Repair of furniture and some home furnishings,

43.39: Other building completion and finishing, or

43.99 other specialised construction activities.

Proposal:

- Division 91 should be revised and named as “Cultural Heritage Activities”.
- Division 91 should include all of these activities scattered in the NACE rev. 2, as well as those that have emerged⁵.

In summary

The statistical data on the economic benefits that arise from the care, sustainable use and access, interpretation and creation of new knowledge about heritage and associated practices is lost to policy makers and those who resource our education and training in cultural heritage.

Congregating the economic activities associated with Heritage into one division provides for efficient data collection resulting in a comprehensive and visible “heritage sector” and will contribute to strategic planning for the sector. This will help to develop evidence-based recommendations and frameworks; cultural values can be ensured in drafting policies for employment, procurement, funding and social support mechanisms. It will provide metrics for cultural heritage economic impact assessments and ultimately promote a European mobility scheme for services and professionals grounded in quality principles driven by cultural significance.

Beyond the Division classification, further detail in the definition of groups and classes is imperative, and for that end, E.C.C.O. has already drafted a possible scenario (see table 1) in its paper “On the classification of the Cultural Heritage sector within NACE”⁶.

Nonetheless the recent launch by the European Commission of the Erasmus Blueprint for Cultural Heritage in 2020 already proposes a new perspective on heritage led activities by their core function towards cultural heritage⁷. Dedicating Division 91 to Cultural heritage activities anticipates the Blueprint outcomes. The project will develop a blueprint for scoping traditional and emerging professions in the heritage sector with their allied knowledge, skills and competences, as well for statistical indicators which can later inform proposals for the NACE framework for heritage economic activities.

⁵ A similar rationale should be applied in the ISCO framework to include an occupational profile for the conservator-restorer in the sub-major group “Legal, Social and Cultural Professions”, as well for other absent heritage occupations.

⁶ http://www.ecco-eu.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ECCO_on_NACE_final_1_.pdf

⁷ In the Blueprint “Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020” the areas proposed are: Safeguarding and Preservation, Crafts and traditional knowledge, Dissemination and Communication, Knowledge and Planning / Management (p.157).

Table 1 – E.C.C.O.’s proposal for a possible revision of Division “91 Cultural Heritage activities” drafted in 2016 by the working group on NACE. The aim was to show a possible scenario where existing or emerging activities could be included, breaking the previous structure to allow new entrances as long as they are heritage values led and the resource is heritage.

Group	Class
91.01 Archives and Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library and Archives activities/Archiving • Library and Archives Administrative management
91.02 Museums Private collections Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museums and Private Collections Activities • Curation of Museums and Private Collections • Exhibition design and construction • Museum education • Collections management • Handling and transportation activities • Administrative management • Invigilation
91.03 Built Heritage – Monuments, churches/religious and historic interiors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation of historical sites and buildings and similar heritage attractions • Heritage Buildings management • Heritage architectural consulting activities • Heritage engineering • Heritage guiding • Heritage promotion • Heritage officer
91.04 Historical and archaeological sites and historic landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeological excavation and survey / Archaeological activities • Heritage site management
91.05 Conservation-Restoration activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Preservation activities • Conservation-Restoration • Preventive conservation • Conservation management • Conservation-Restoration Technical support • Conservation Science • Conservation Research
91.06 Craft activities towards restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of traditional techniques of production/ creation to the restoration of cultural heritage material • Heritage reconstruction/ renovation using traditional techniques and new materials



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