Renovated Museum of Kruja opens its doors to the public

Renovation transforms a unique historical site into a modern museum

- The Ethnographic Museum of Kruja, restored after the 2019 earthquake, reopens featuring new museum displays of artifacts alongside augmented digital experience.

- The €850,000 works, implemented under the EU4Culture programme, took two years to complete and included structural consolidation, restoration, new design of museum displays and multimedia interpretation.

- Distinguished guests, including Minister of Economy, Culture and Innovation Blendi Gonxhja, EU Ambassador Silvio Gonzato and UNOPS Austria Multi Country Office Director Freya von Groote, attended the inauguration ceremony.

Kruja, Albania.— An important Albania's cultural heritage site, the Ethnographic Museum of Kruja, has reopened its doors following extensive restoration work. The museum, damaged in the 2019 earthquake, has been transformed into a modern space thanks to an €850,000 investment from the European Union through the EU4Culture programme. UNOPS, in partnership with the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, managed the two-year restoration project.

The revitalised museum contains around 1000 artifacts and offers visitors a unique learning experience focused on Albanian ethnography and culture. This is achieved through innovative storytelling and multimedia displays, virtual and augmented reality experiences, projections and audio guides, and an interactive wall.
One of the museum’s highlights is a virtual dressing room, which allows visitors to take selfies while (virtually) wearing traditional clothing dating from the 18th century. It is anticipated that the museum will attract more visitors than before, stimulating the local economy by increasing tourism and creating new income opportunities in the community.

The reopening of the museum was attended by H.E. Blendi Gonxhja, Minister of Economy, Culture and Innovation, H.E. Silvio Gonzato, EU Ambassador to Albania; Ms Freya von Groote, UNOPS Austria Multi Country Office Director; Ms Fiona McCluney, UN Resident Coordinator; and other dignitaries.

The Minister of Economy, Culture, and Innovation, Mr Blendi Gonxhja, remarked on the occasion: “I am certain that complete reconceptualization of this space, new ways to display the artifacts, along with the addition of interactive elements will increase the fascinating power that this museum has, offering a unique and unforgettable experience for everyone”.

EU Ambassador, H.E. Silvio Gonzato, added: “EU4Culture is not just about renovating buildings or exhibiting artifacts. It’s about showcasing Albania’s cultural identity. When we know who we are and where we come from, we are not afraid of diversity, of other cultures and traditions. That is why through this museum, and the EU4Culture programme, we are not just preserving the Albanian heritage, but also promoting a more inclusive society”.

The Director of UNOPS Austria Multi Country Office, Freya von Groote, stated: “This restoration project showcases our shared commitment with the European Union and Albania’s Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation to preserve Albania’s rich cultural heritage for future generations”.

For more information, visit:
https://eu4culture.al/
https://www.facebook.com/eu4culturealbania
https://www.instagram.com/eu4culturealbania/
https://x.com/eu4culture
https://www.youtube.com/@eu4culturealbania393

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About EU4Culture programme
The EU4Culture programme is funded by the European Union (EU) and is implemented by UNOPS in close partnership with the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation of Albania. It focuses on renovation and revitalization of major cultural heritage sites damaged by the earthquake and represents one of the largest cultural heritage programmes funded by the European Union with a total budget of € 40 million.

The programme focuses on renovation of major cultural heritage sites in line with the UN Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. In parallel, the programme aims to enhance Albania’s tourism potential, thus directly contributing to local and regional socio-economic recovery. More information at: eu4culture.al

About UNOPS
UNOPS mission is to help people build better lives and countries achieve peace and sustainable development. We help the United Nations, governments and other partners to manage projects, and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement in an efficient way. Read more at www.unops.org and follow UNOPS on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and WhatsApp.

About the Delegation of the European Union in Albania
The Delegation of the European Union to Albania is supporting the country in its path towards integration into the EU. The Delegation manages EU Assistance programmes and informs the Albanian public, decision-makers and opinion-formers about the integration process, EU institutions and its policies. More at: www.eeas.europa.eu/albania/.

About the Ethnographic Museum in Kruja
The museum once served as the residence of the prominent Toptani family. It was built in 1764 and it is an important cultural heritage site for understanding Albania's rich culture and the customs and traditions. The museum provides visitors with a unique opportunity to glimpse into the daily lives of past generations, their routines, family celebrations, and other important events. Additionally, the museum presents insights into the traditional production of food, olive oil, rakia, and other local products.