



FIVA

Position paper

We Protect

We Preserve

We Promote

FIVA's Contribution to the European Union's Culture Compass

Historic Vehicles as Living Cultural Heritage within the Culture Compass for Europe

1. Introduction

The Culture Compass for Europe represents an important opportunity to strengthen the role of culture and heritage within European policies, recognising culture as a common good and a horizontal priority. In this context, historic vehicles should be considered as cultural heritage assets and as an element of our common European identity. Cultural heritage policy must therefore include operational heritage, in which use is embedded within preservation, supported by a proportionate and heritage-conscious approach that safeguards cultural participation and skills transmission. Recognising technical, industrial, and mobile heritage in this way allows historic vehicles to contribute positively to European Union objectives in culture, education, youth, sustainability, and territorial, social and economic cohesion.

Vehicles of historical interest are already recognised in EU Law in several pieces of legislation¹. This legal recognition shall be accompanied by a cultural-political acknowledgement, for which this Culture Compass for Europe is perfectly suited.

2. Convergence with the Culture Compass for Europe

The launch of the Culture Compass in Europe and the proposed interinstitutional declaration “Europe for Culture – Culture for Europe” is an important step to acknowledge culture as a common good and a horizontal priority within European Union policies. This approach embeds cultural heritage, creativity, and cultural participation into the decisional and financial frameworks of the European Union.

FIVA uses the following parameters to identify strong similarity with the Culture Compass:

a) Heritage protection and skills transmission

Historic vehicles represent both tangible and intangible heritage. Support is given to EU goals

¹ For example, in Directive 2014/45/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 on periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers: ‘vehicle of historical interest’ means any vehicle which is considered to be historical by the Member State of registration or one of its appointed authorising bodies and which fulfils all the following conditions:

—it was manufactured or registered for the first time at least 30 years ago;
—its specific type, as defined in the relevant Union or national law, is no longer in production;
—it is historically preserved and maintained in its original state and has not undergone substantial changes in the technical characteristics of its main components;

regarding education, vocational training, youth, and the transfer of knowledge between generations.

b) Territorial, social and economic cohesion and sustainable cultural tourism

Historical vehicle events are important in cultural tourism, especially in rural and periphery areas. These events contribute to the promotion of local identity, small and medium-sized enterprises, and cultural organisations.

c) Sustainability, resilience, and adaptation

Balanced approaches to sustainability take into account the minimal environmental impact of historic vehicles, as well as responsible use, alternative fuels, innovation, and climate resilience for cultural heritage.

d) Structured dialogue and evidence-based policymaking

Structured dialogue with cultural stakeholders and the creation of common data frameworks are welcomed. Data, know-how, and experience can support informed policymaking.

3. Historic Vehicles as Living Cultural Heritage

Historic vehicles represent a dynamic way of preserving technical and industrial heritage. As opposed to static collections, they involve conservation, restoration, operation, public display, and the transfer of expertise.

Their continued operation is essential to:

- maintaining originality and technicality;
- ensuring intergenerational transfer of skills;
- enabling public access, education, and cultural participation;
- supporting local and regional cultural ecosystems.

4. Commitment

FIVA is ready to:

1. take an active part in the structured dialogue announced by the Culture Compass;
2. contribute expertise to the development of coherent, proportional, and cross-sectoral policy approaches;
3. assist EU institutions in recognising historic vehicles as part of the cultural heritage ecosystem of Europe.

About FIVA

The Fédération Internationale des Véhicules Anciens (FIVA) is a worldwide non-profit organisation dedicated to the protection, preservation and promotion of historic vehicles. Founded in 1966, it is the association uniting owners and collectors of historic vehicles around the world. Historic vehicles are therefore a part of our technical and cultural heritage.

FIVA's national member organisations represent around 1.5 million historic vehicle owners in the EU and around 2 million in over 70 countries worldwide. One of FIVA's core objectives is to ensure that historic vehicles can continue to be preserved and continue to be used on public roads. The cars, motorcycles, vans, trucks, buses, agricultural vehicles and steam engines of yesterday are our motoring and cultural heritage.

Historic vehicles are contemporary witnesses of another era and it is essential to protect this heritage today and for the future. FIVA supports road safety and responsible vehicle maintenance. However, preserving our motoring heritage and promoting sustainable vehicle use require a regulatory approach that is proportionate, flexible, and respectful of automotive culture. We urge legislators to seize this opportunity to modernise roadworthiness rules without undermining the very values they aim to protect.