



CRIME PREVENTION PROJECT RECEIVES EUROPEAN AWARD



Leonor Sá,
Portuguese Judiciary Police Museum, Museum Curator

'SOS Azulejo', a project designed and implemented by the Portuguese Polícia Judiciária Museum, received the Grand Prix, 'EU Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards' 2013, in Category 4 — Education, Training and Awareness-Raising.

Portuguese architecture is known worldwide for its 'azulejos', which decorate the exterior and interior walls of hundreds of thousands of Portuguese buildings, from churches to hospitals, from palaces to railway stations, from fountains to monuments, from all sorts of public buildings to entire ancient urban private housing blocks. Because this kind of cultural heritage is increasingly valued by art experts,

historians and antique dealers, it is getting more and more tempting for art and antiques burglary and trafficking — and the number of thefts has been rising accordingly. These factors put the Portuguese historic and artistic tile heritage at greater risk every day ⁽¹⁾.

The 'SOS Azulejo Project' was launched, in 2007, by the Portuguese Judiciary Police Museum (Judiciary Police School) and has been coordinated since then by its curator, Leonor Sá, who received the award from Plácido Domingo and Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism, Sport, Media and Youth at the impressive scenery of the ancient Herodes Atticus Theatre in Athens.

www.sosazulejo.com



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Partners

ANMP

Associação Nacional de Municípios Portugueses

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Rede Temática de Estudos de Azulejaria e Cerâmica João Miguel dos Santos Simões

GNR

Guarda Nacional Republicana

PSP

Polícia de Segurança Pública

<http://www.sosazulejo.com>

⁽¹⁾ Projeto SOS Azulejo, http://www.sosazulejo.com/?page_id=97 (30.10.2013).



The initial idea of this undertaking was to create a crime prevention project against theft, traffic and vandalism, but it soon grew into something bigger. 'SOS Azulejo' now also includes raising awareness about the importance of this kind of cultural heritage and its conservation, as well as obtaining a global approach and a more effective response to the problem of extensive loss of the 'azulejos'. Indeed, Portuguese 'azulejos' stand out in the world cultural heritage for their invaluable richness, but they have been victim of massive plunder in the last 20 years in terms of theft and, also, lack of conservation.

As the judiciary police have competencies in crimes related to cultural heritage in Portugal, the Portuguese Judiciary Police Museum decided to create 'SOS Azulejo', an interdisciplinary project against theft, vandalism and lack of conservation which included raising people's awareness to the relevance of this cultural heritage. With the important partnership of various organisations — the former Ministry of Culture, two universities, local authorities and other police forces — several actions were implemented from 2007 onwards, attaining important measurable positive results in terms of the project aims and community impact. For example: the decrease of 80 % in registered tile thefts; new

regulations prohibiting demolitions of tile-covered building façades in Lisbon and preventive protection of buildings with important tile collections. These positive results confirm the importance of interdisciplinary work and institutional collaboration towards common goals, transcending the difference of perspectives and optimising resources.

Partners:

- Escola de Polícia Judiciária
- Instituto Politécnico de Tomar (IPT)
- Instituto de Gestão do Património Arquitectónico e Arqueológico (Igespar)
- Associação Nacional de Municípios Portugueses (ANMP)
- Guarda Nacional Republicana (GNR)
- Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP)
- Rede Temática de Estudos de Azulejaria e Cerâmica João Miguel dos Santos Simões (RTEACJMSS).



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<http://www.europanostra.org/awards/122/>