

PRESS RELEASE

Stakeholder Events in Bologna & Imola

MetaHeritage Brings Together European Stakeholders in Bologna and Imola to Drive Innovation in Heritage and Industry

Bologna & Imola, April 2026 – The MetaHeritage project successfully hosted two high-level stakeholder events in **Bologna and Imola**, bringing together experts from across Europe to explore how **cultural heritage, innovation, and industry can jointly drive sustainable regional development**.

Italian Stakeholders' Dialogue in Bologna

Held on **16 April 2026** at The Social Hub in Bologna, the **Italian Stakeholders' Dialogue** gathered regional innovation actors, SMEs, research institutions, and project partners to discuss the development of **interregional innovation ecosystems**.

The event featured contributions from key organisations, including:

- **Art-ER**, presenting the regional innovation ecosystem and S3 monitoring system
- Emilia-Romagna Clust-ERs (MECH, CREATE, BUILD, INNOVATE, TOURISM)
- Leading universities and research institutions
- Regional SMEs active in digital, cultural, and tourism sectors

A key focus was the presentation of MetaHeritage **business cases**, including:

- The **Motor Valley** model, linking heritage, automotive industry, and innovation
- The **Wellness Valley** concept, combining tourism, wellbeing, and regional development

The dialogue provided a platform for **knowledge exchange, stakeholder engagement, and cross-sector collaboration**, reinforcing Emilia-Romagna’s role as a leading innovation hub in Europe.



Image credit: Richard Joos

Stakeholder Networking Event in Imola (FIA WEC Framework)

On **17 April 2026**, MetaHeritage partners organised the stakeholder networking and matchmaking event **“Fostering Innovation for Enterprises Linked to the Automotive Industry and Big Events”** at Palazzo Sersanti in Imola, in the framework of the **FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC)**.

The event brought together stakeholders from the **automotive, tourism, and innovation sectors** to explore how major events can act as catalysts for **sustainable innovation, regional development, and cross-sector collaboration**.

The programme opened with institutional remarks from Elisa Spada (Municipality of Imola Deputy Mayor), Silvia Poli (President of Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Imola) and Rosa Grimaldi (Città Metropolitana di Bologna).

A key session on **racetracks as drivers of sustainable innovation and tourism** was moderated by **Cristiana Pace**, featuring contributions from, **Josep Lluís Santamaría, Jérôme Lachaze, Giacomo Pisati and Elisa Spada**.

The event also included an **inspirational session on the economic and cultural value of major events**, where:

- **Michele Colavito** presented MetaHeritage and the **Motor Valley business case**
- **Elisabetta Bracci** highlighted innovative technologies and solutions for sustainable events

A high-level **roundtable discussion on strategies and synergies for a competitive territory**, moderated by **Silvia Spinelli**, brought together experts from academia, industry, and regional authorities, including **Andrea Guizzardi, Silvia Rossi, Luca Panini, Manuela Graf and Valentina Ridolfi**.

The event concluded with a strong emphasis on the need to **connect industrial excellence, cultural heritage, and innovation ecosystems** to unlock new opportunities for European regions.



Image credit: Richard Joos

Strengthening European collaboration

Together, the events in Bologna and Imola showcased the **MetaHeritage approach to innovation**: bridging cultural heritage, industry, and digital technologies to foster **resilient and competitive regional ecosystems**.

By connecting stakeholders across sectors and regions, MetaHeritage continues to support the development of **scalable, future-oriented solutions** aligned with European priorities in **sustainability, digital transformation, and cultural heritage valorisation**.