

TheSPIS (MSCA Doctoral Network) Recruitment Call

APPLICATION DEADLINE 26/06/2026 at 23:59 CET

Expected start date: by 15th October 2026

The HORIZON-MSCA-2024-DN-01-01, TheSPIS - *Theaters, Sanctuaries, Performance: Interaction and Sustainability* (Project ID 101223894) is recruiting for:

- **12 fully funded PhD positions** (36-month contracts)
- **Tuition fees fully covered**
- **Competitive monthly allowances** (as per MSCA DN rates)
 - Living Allowance: €3480-4753/month (adjusted by country correction coefficient)
 - Mobility Allowance: €710/month
 - plus a Monthly Family Allowance, €660, if applicable. It will be paid if the researcher has family, regardless of whether the family will move with the researcher or not. In this context, family is defined as persons linked to the researcher by (i) marriage, or (ii) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the national or relevant regional legislation of the country where this relationship was formalised; or (iii) dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher.
- Opportunity to pursue a PhD degree at a leading European university within a collaborative, international network
- Comprehensive interdisciplinary training program concerning both research-specific and transversal competences, and transferable skills
- **2-month international secondments** with non-academic partners in a relevant workplace environment
- Active participation in workshops, conferences, and network-wide events to build professional and scientific connections
- Involvement in open science and public engagement initiatives; building knowledge transfer attitudes and skills
- Stimulating, multidisciplinary, intersectoral and international research environment within a prestigious European training network
- **Personalised Career Development Plan**



**Funded by
the European Union**

TheSPIS has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Grant Agreement No. 101223894

TheSPIS Partnership

Hosting Universities:

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PALERMO, Palermo, Italy
JOHANNES GUTENBERG-UNIVERSITÄT MAINZ, Mainz, Germany
PANEPISTIMIO PATRON, Patras, Greece
UNIVERSITÉ DE LORRAINE, Nancy, France

Associated Partners:

Partners hosting secondments:

ASSESSORATO REGIONALE DEI BENI CULTURALI E DELL'IDENTITÀ SICILIANA,
Palermo, Italy
DIAZOMA, Athens, Greece
NEXTMIND SRL, Firenze-Milano
HEIDELBERG CENTER FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg,
Heidelberg, Germany

Non-academic partners involved in training and/or in public engagement activities:

SCUOLA NAZIONALE DEL PATRIMONIO E DELLE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI, Ministero
della Cultura, Roma
LICEO CLASSICO STATALE "GIOVANNI MELI", Palermo, Italy
LEIBNIZ-ZENTRUM FÜR ARCHAOLOGIE, Mainz, Germany
STAATSTHEATER MAINZ, Mainz, Germany

Project summary

TheSPIS MSCA DN training research program focuses on the ancient Graeco-Roman theatres and sanctuaries under the prism of both material remains and performances/rituals. It revolves around the idea that this topic offers a unique opportunity to connect present and past Mediterranean societies through different types of academic and non-academic engagement such as reception, fruition, patrimonialisation, modern spectacles, and research. The DN aims to drive new steps in research on Theatre/theatres as elements of cultural religious and social discourse, underlining their close relationship to sanctuaries and ancient religion. This can be grasped through archaeological evidence, and the interaction of their architectural, textual, and iconographical components.

Following an interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary approach fostered by intersectoral collaborations, our goal will be achieved through TheSPIS' network, aimed at high quality research training of 12 researchers. Holding different skills and coming from different backgrounds, they will work on interrelated projects so to propose an innovative research approach which outbreaks traditional methods by connecting several disciplines and adding intersectoral and technological contribution.

Cooperation between international partners from central-north and south European countries will allow to share scientific approaches and sensibilities towards cultural heritage which spring from different local stories, locations, and research traditions. This will stimulate research environment and contribute to develop sustainable and knowledge-grounded models of preservation/enhancement of the ancient heritage, to be shared among scientists, policy makers, and the wider public. This exercise of interactive and interconnected research will provide a key steppingstone in the appropriation and preservation of theatrical heritage by current societies, driven by knowledge produced by young researchers in the ERA.

List of PhD Positions:

DC No.	Project Title	Host Institution	Country	Main Supervisor	Secondment
1	<i>Theatre-temples: regional studies in Sicily-southern Italy</i>	Palermo University (UniPa)	Italy	Portale Elisa Chiara UniPa	Parco archeologico e paesaggistico Valle dei Templi, Agrigento-Italy
2	<i>Theatra/performance and visual perspectives within the sanctuary</i>	Palermo University (UniPa)	Italy	Portale Elisa Chiara UniPa	Parco Archeologico di Naxos e Taormina, Taormina-Italy
3	<i>Processes of conservation and monitoring for sustainable fruition and enhancement of a theatre-sanctuary complex: the case of Solunto</i>	Palermo University (UniPa)	Italy	Scaduto Rosario UniPa	Parco archeologico di Segesta, Segesta-Italy
4	<i>The theatre of Iaitai: from knowledge to a sustainable fruition</i>	Palermo University (UniPa)	Italy	Limoncelli Massimo UniPa	Diazoma Association, Athens-Greece
5	<i>Ways of Interconnectedness: Actor Figurines in Greek Sanctuaries</i>	Mainz University (JGU)	Germany	Frielinghaus Heide JGU	Museo Luigi Bernabò Brea (Parco Archeologico delle Isole Eolie), Lipari-Italy
6	<i>Enacted conflicts. Reverberations between stage, audience and society in the Graeco-Roman theatre</i>	Mainz University (JGU)	Germany	Blank Thomas JGU	Nextmind company, Firenze-Milano, Italy
7	<i>Choosing, Adapting, Reshaping: studies on the changing design of tragedy-related scenes and figurines in the Late Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Imperial Period</i>	Mainz University (JGU)	Germany	Frielinghaus Heide JGU	Diazoma Association, Athens-Greece
8	<i>Asking the god, performing for the god: manteia and theatrical performances in the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona (Epirus)</i>	University of Patras	Greece	Di Napoli Valentina UPatras	Heidelberg Center for Cultural Heritage, Heidelberg-Germany
9	<i>The unheard voice of otherness: slaves in ancient theatres and their modern reception</i>	University of Patras (UPatras)	Greece	Di Napoli Valentina UPatras	Museo Archeologico Regionale Antonino Salinas, Palermo-Italy
10	<i>Ritual and theatrical performance</i>	University of Patras (UPatras)	Greece	Marinis Agis UPatras	Nextmind company, Firenze-Milano, Italy
11	<i>Theatres and sanctuaries in the north-western provinces of the Roman empire</i>	University of Lorraine-Nancy (UniLorr)	France	Interdonato Elisabetta UniLorr	Heidelberg Center for Cultural Heritage, Heidelberg-Germany
12	<i>Theatres and sanctuaries in the south-western provinces of the Roman empire: re-shaping Hellenistic and Roman models</i>	University of Lorraine-Nancy (UniLorr)	France	Interdonato Elisabetta UniLorr	Parco Archeologico di Tindari, Patti-Italy

Recruitment will be carefully executed and monitored in accordance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and in the DN mobility rules. Recruitment procedure will be open, transparent, impartial and equitable; it will be merit based and will take into account candidates' potential for professional development.

TheSPIS will recruit prospective talented researchers of any **nationality, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or age** to undertake a **PhD** in one of the following fields of study: Cultural Heritage, Classical Archaeology, Classics, Ancient History, Theatre Studies, Historical and Religious Studies. Depending on the Host University of each project, doctoral candidates will be included in the relevant doctorates.

Before submitting his/her application, each candidate has to make sure to comply with the **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA** specified as follows:

Doctoral candidates

- Must not be in possession of a **doctoral degree** at the time of recruitment by the **hosting institution**. Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will not be considered eligible.
- Must **not have lived or worked in the host country for more than 12 months** in the past **36 months** before recruitment
- Must hold a **Master's degree (or equivalent) in the Humanities, for example Archaeology / Classics / Cultural Heritage / (Ancient) Architecture and Restoration / (Ancient) History / Theatre Studies**, with an **adequate background** in the disciplines involved in the DN, and particularly in those relevant for the DC position/s. Doctoral candidates must **have obtained their degree by 10 October 2026**.
- Must demonstrate **adequate English proficiency** (written and spoken), and adequate ability **to understand scientific bibliography in the languages of the DN**.
- **Exclusivity:** The candidate must be working exclusively for the action.

Candidates must submit a complete application form (TEMPLATE + ATTACHMENTS) within the submission deadline via e-mail to the following address: thespis-dn@unipa.it

Each candidate is allowed to apply for one to a maximum of three positions; he/she must provide the following information (in English) in the **TEMPLATE**:

- **Personal information** such as **first and last name, nationality, and contact details**.
- Title of the **Master's Degree** held.

- The **Doctoral Candidate position(s) (DC) to which he/she wishes to apply (up to 3)** among the following (for further details, see TheSPIS' website):

DC1: Theatre-temples: regional studies in Sicily-southern Italy, based at UniPA

DC2: Theatra/performance and visual perspectives within the sanctuary, based at UniPA

DC3: Processes of conservation and monitoring for sustainable fruition and enhancement of a theatre-sanctuary complex: the case of Solunto, based at UniPA

DC4: The theatre of Iaitai: from knowledge to a sustainable fruition, based at UniPA

DC5: Ways of Interconnectedness: Actor Figurines in Greek Sanctuaries, based at JGU

DC6: Enacted conflicts. Reverberations between stage, audience and society in the Graeco-Roman theatre, based at JGU

DC7: Choosing, Adapting, Reshaping: studies on the changing design of tragedy related scenes and figurines in the Late Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Imperial Period, based at JGU

DC8: Asking the god, performing for the god: manteia and theatrical performances in the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona (Epirus), based at UPatras

DC9: The unheard voice of otherness: slaves in ancient theatres and their modern reception, based at UPatras

DC10: Ritual and theatrical performance, based at UPatras

DC11: Theatres and sanctuaries in the northwestern provinces of the Roman empire, based at UniLorr

DC12: Theatres and sanctuaries in the south-western provinces of the Roman empire: re-shaping Hellenistic and Roman models, based at UniLorr

- **Declaration of eligibility**

Candidates must enclose the following documents in PDF format (list of attachments and ATTACHMENTS):

- **Curriculum vitae** specifying education and experience, including career breaks, and supported by pertinent documents (see CV MODEL)
- **Research proposal(s)** (max. 5 pages per position)
- A **motivation letter** (maximum 2 pages) highlighting their research experience and academic achievements and explaining why they are interested in TheSPIS and in one or more (up to 3) particular research project/s

- A scanned copy of the student's **Academic Record**. These documents must show the grades attained in exam periods and disciplines. If the certified academic records are not in English or in the language of the Host Institution (Italian for the University of Palermo; German for the University of Mainz; Greek for the University of Patras; French for the University of Lorraine-Nancy), applicants should also attach a certified translation in one of the above-mentioned languages.
- At least **two recommendation letters** from university lecturers or scientists who are familiar with the candidate's academic work and who can judge his/her potential as a doctoral researcher. **Applications not supported by these letters will not be eligible.**
- A **summary of any (academic/non-academic) research and/or work experience relevant to the DN research fields**
- A list of publications or writing samples (2000 to 3000 words), if any, and relevant publications **to be enclosed within the application (as pdf files)**
- Any additional information considered **relevant** to the application
- Copy of the **Passport or Identity card**

The TheSPIS application and **selection process** will be organised in the following steps:

- **Eligibility check:** the TheSPIS hiring committee will check that each application is complete and that applicants fulfil the eligibility criteria described in the previous section.
- **Remote Evaluation:** each eligible application will be assessed by the scientists responsible for each host institution (WPs' leaders) of the TheSPIS Network. They will select the candidates apt to pass through to the following stage. Evaluation criteria will be based on academic record and CV, proposal/s, motivation letter and letters of reference, scientific publications (if any).
- **Interviews (online):** Short-listed candidates will be interviewed by an online panel composed of at least 3 WPs' leaders and TheSPIS supervisors. The language of the interview will be English. Evaluation criteria will be based on the candidate's potential, motivation, academic background and attitude in doing research (see below).
- **Notification of the selection outcomes:** the TheSPIS management team will notify short-listed candidates of the outcome via e-mail, and those selected will be put in touch with the relative **Host Institution** to start the official hiring procedure. Applicants who have not been successful but have received a positive evaluation will be put on a **waiting list** to cover possible renunciations and future positions.



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Evaluation criteria

The **maximum score** for each candidate is 100 points

Proposal/s Evaluation – maximum 20 points

Qualification – maximum 40 points

Interview – maximum 40 points

Interviews will take place online through the Microsoft Teams Platform, according to the time schedule established by the Commission. Before starting the interview, candidates (under penalty of exclusion from participation) must show the identification document attached in copy within the application form.

Key dates:

- **Feb 20, 2026:** Launch of 12 DC Positions
- **June 26, 2026:** Deadline for online application
- **July 10, 2026:** Shortlist (preselected) candidates and send interview invitations
- **July 17, 2026:** List of successful candidates and reserve list
- **Oct 15, 2026:** **Targeted starting date for DC contracts**

For any issues regarding the application procedure, or any technical problems, please contact the PI, Prof. Elisa Chiara Portale (UniPa), at the e-mail address chiara.portale@unipa.it