

Application form – CALRE Awards 2023

Submitting assembly*

Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of the Azores

Contact person*

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Name of the initiative*

Azorean Parliament Museum

Type of initiative*

Preservation of parliamentary heritage and regional identity

Start date of the initiative

Inaugurated on 13th of July 2023

End date of the initiative

Does not apply

Web page of the initiative

www.alra.pt/index.php/artigossite/1510

Short description of the initiative*

Inaugurated on 13th of July 2023, the Azorean Parliament Museum aims to provide to the visitors a deeper understanding of the role of the Regional Parliament in the construction and development of the Azorean Regional Autonomy.

By preserving the memory of the Legislative Assembly of the Azores, highlighting personalities and events that shaped the process of the political and administrative autonomy, the Azorean Parliament Museum contributes to promote and strengthen the Azorean identity and the democratic values.

The exhibition path was designed to capture the visitors to reflect on the political history of the Region and, at the same time, to give to different generations a better understanding on the importance of the Regional Autonomy of the Azores.

Main features of the initiative*

The Parliament Museum has a permanent exhibition which is divided into four double rooms, offering an enriching and informative experience to the visitors, promoting the comprehension of the democratic system and how its institutions work.

The permanent exhibition is composed by the following spaces:

- 1) Reception room - dedicated to the history of the building, which was, first, at the service of global communications and, later, at the service of regional and local community;
- 2) Gallery of Presidents - aims to honour and recognize the contribution made by each President of the Legislative Assembly, not only in conducting parliamentary work, but also as a representative of all Azoreans;
- 3) Autonomy room - dedicated to the evolution of the political-administrative history of the Azorean archipelago, referring the challenges faced until the subsequent achievement of the Regional Autonomy of the Azores. This space also has a strong recreational component, that helps to deepen the knowledge of the current governance regime in Azores.
- 4) Parliament room - dedicated to understanding the functioning of the Legislative Assembly of the Azores as a representative body of all Azoreans and base of democracy and civic participation at a regional level.

The Parliament Museum has two rooms reserved for temporary exhibitions, designed to attract the local population, and create dynamics to reinforce the Parliament's role near community.

Now, these two spaces have an exhibition dedicated to "Mário Mesquita – the journalist, the politician, the teacher". Mário Mesquita was a former Member of the Portuguese Parliament, recognized as a great thinker of regional autonomy and democracy.

The building of the Parliament Museum also houses the Álvaro Monjardino Library, named after the first President of the Legislative Assembly of the Azores to honour him and his legacy. This parliamentary library holds a large bibliographical and documentary collection, which ALRAA intends to reinforce continuously, encouraging its preservation and public diffusion.

In addition to being a space for aggregating regional knowledge, it also intendeds to promote regional thinking, hosting events and presentations of regional books.

To note that the access to the Parliament Museum is free and complements the visit to the Parliament house, also accessible to everyone.

Role of the assembly in the success of the initiative*

The existence of the Parliament Museum comes from the direct action of the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, since its origin idea, which took shape with the ALRAA

Resolution No. 24/2015/A approved in Plenary Session, going through its design, development, installation, and maintenance.

The Resolution approved in 2015 was developed in different phases, following the directives of the successive Presidencies of the Legislative Assembly of the Azores, but always ensured by the Assembly's own resources and implemented by its multiple services, using external services only occasionally.

The first stage was the rehabilitation and repair of the historical building that houses the Parliament Museum. Initially built by the German submarine cable company, Deutsch-Atlantische Telegraphengesellschaft (D.A.T), nowadays is a legacy of the history of world communications, being part of a building complex classified as Property of Public Interest.

The restoration of the building, carried out between 2015 and 2021, was technically well-supported to respect its original identity and made by employees from the general services of the Parliament.

The second stage, between 2020 and 2023, focused on the conception and development of the project of the museum. The curatorship of the exhibition was developed by the Archive, Library and Parliament Museum Services of the Legislative Assembly of the Azores, based on the research made by its services, having in mind the themes defined by ALRAA Resolution No. 24/2015/A.

The definition of the exhibition design and the elaboration of permanent exhibitions was made according to the functions of the building. The drafting of the furniture and the construction of most of the exhibition pieces were carried out by employees from the general services of the Assembly.

The third and final stage, implemented with the inauguration of the Museum on 13th of July 2023, concerns to its visitation service and daily functioning, permanently ensured by the Archive, Library and Parliament Museum Unit, in cooperation with the Assembly general services responsible for its maintenance.

European orientation of the initiative*

The development of museums is largely influenced by the cultural policies adopted by each Member State. For the development of this initiative were adopted the guidelines that exist in the current Portuguese legislation, based on democratization of culture and cultural democracy. Nevertheless, the methodologies and practices adopted by the European Union were followed, namely:

- ST21 Methodology Guidelines
[New Strategy 21 Methodology Guidelines - Culture and Cultural Heritage: newsroom \(coe.int\)](#)

- Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/compendium>

Documentation

Annex 1 - Azorean Parliament Museum – Short presentation