

VENICE: \$12 M REFURBISHMENT OF THE JEWISH MUSEUM AND 3 SYNAGOGUES



The Venetian Heritage Council, an international organization, announced that it would fund the renovations of three historic synagogues in Venice as well as the Venice Jewish Museum. The refurbishments that will cost around \$12 million are expected to be fully completed by the year 2016 in time for the 500th anniversary of the creation of the Jewish Ghetto.

The Council's chairman, Mr. Joseph Sitt, together with the vice chairman, Diane Von Furstenburg, the famous fashion designer of Belgian origin, will lead the international fundraising efforts. The designer's mother is one of the few Auschwitz survivors. Renata Codello, the head of the Venice office of the Italian Culture Ministry under the UNESCO program, will foresee the whole project.

The museum that was founded in 1953 is located at the heart of the Venice former ghetto, where the Jews were confined in 1516. The museum has been in existence for around half a millennium.

Through the time, the museum has undergone weathering and the whole structure has weakened. Part of the funds is expected to cater for the following:

The walls and other structures will be repaired and reinforced throughout the building. The carved biblical features on the gilded wooden panels will be fully restored. The various adornments and designs throughout the museum will also be fixed. The existing museum space will be improved and upgraded. There are also plans to add more space.

The synagogues that are located on top of the ghetto buildings have been in existence since the 16th century. They have also suffered the structural weakening through time. **Two of them are still operational and will receive structural revitalization. The non-operational one will also be repaired and reopened.**

After the repairs and restoration of the museum, the building will become more attractive and will have a bigger capacity to hold more visitors. The synagogues, whose existence has been forgotten, are likely to get to the itinerary of several tour operators and become more popular.

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