



PRESS RELEASE



THE DORDOGNE WILL HOST THE 10TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF CAVES AND THE SUBTERRANEAN WORLD IN 2026

A unique global event in France, at the heart of the Prehistoric region BENEATH THE EARTH, BEYOND TIME

From **September 22 to October 1, 2026**, the **Dordogne** will become the world capital of subterranean heritage. For the first time, France will host the **International Congress of Caves and the Subterranean World**, organized by **ISCA** (International Show Caves Association) in partnership with the French Federation for Subterranean Tourism and Heritage (**FFTS**).

This exceptional event will bring together **100 to 150 international professionals** from over 30 countries, coming to share their experiences, practices, and innovations related to the management and **preservation of caves and subterranean sites**.

ISCA: AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION SERVING THE SUBTERRANEAN WORLD

Founded in 1990 in Genga (Italy), the **International Show Caves Association (ISCA)** now brings together more than 100 members worldwide: managers of developed caves, associations, scientists, public institutions, and experts.

Present on all continents, ISCA pursues several essential missions:

- **Promoting** sustainable management and rigorous preservation of tourist caves and mines;
- **Ensuring visitor safety** and the protection of the subterranean environment;
- **Raising** public awareness;
- **Encouraging** international cooperation;
- **Showcasing** unique natural, cultural, and historical sites.

Thanks to its **influence**, the association plays a key role in the protection and transmission of this fragile and remarkable heritage.



THE FFTS: AN ESSENTIAL NATIONAL NETWORK

Born from ANECAT, created in 1962, the French Federation of Subterranean Tourism and Heritage (FFTS) now represents **92 subterranean sites** open to the public, true ambassadors of the invisible world.

Among them:

- 30% **classified** sites,
- 25% **historical monuments**,
- 25% **prehistoric** sites,
- 4 **UNESCO** World Heritage sites,
- More than 30 sites awarded the **Qualité Tourisme** label.

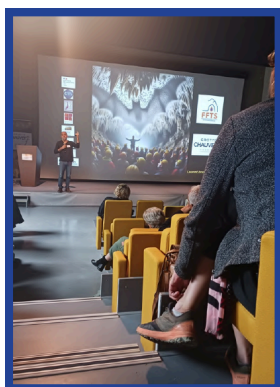
The FFTS works to unite, promote, protect, and train, in the service of an ethical, safe, and sustainable subterranean tourism.



AN UNPRECEDENTED INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS IN FRANCE

Held every four years in a different country, the **ISCA Congress** had never before been hosted in France. After previous editions in Bermuda, Slovenia, Australia, Italy, and Texas, 2026 will mark a historic milestone. The FFTS proposed the **Dordogne**, an emblematic territory of Prehistory and major sites, in order to highlight:

- the **French expertise** in management,
- the exceptional quality of the national **subterranean heritage**,
- the dynamic **cultural tourism** in Nouvelle-Aquitaine.

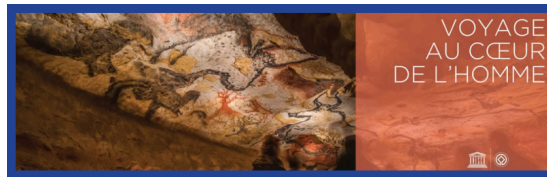


A KEY EVENT FOR NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE

Nouvelle Aquitaine is the second region in France in terms of the number of FFTS (French Federation of Subterranean Tourism & Heritage) subterranean sites, with 22% of the national network's members.

The congress will be an opportunity to showcase:

- the **diversity** of regional tourist caves,
- the **expertise** of site managers,
- and the **economic importance** of cave tourism for rural areas.



FOCUS ON THE DORDOGNE: AN EMBLEMATIC TERRITORY OF THE SUBTERRANEAN WORLD

With **world-renowned sites** such as Lascaux, Proumeyssac, Tourtoirac, Maxange, Rouffignac, as well as exceptional troglodytic cities like La Roque Saint-Christophe or the Maison Forte de Reignac, the Dordogne is a true natural laboratory of Prehistory, geology, and human occupation.

The congress will allow participants to discover:

- unique **decorated caves**, found nowhere else in the world,
- a spectacular **chasm**,
- remarkable **troglodytic dwellings**,
- major **cultural sites** (Brantôme, Hautefort, Milandes, Sarlat...).

This immersion will be enriched by the discovery of the **region's gastronomic and cultural heritage**.



AN EVENT WITH SIGNIFICANT MEDIA AND HERITAGE IMPACT

The **ISCA Congress** represents:

- an **unprecedented opportunity for France** to assert its leadership in the preservation of subterranean heritage;
- a major lever for the promotion of **subterranean tourism**;
- a way to highlight a sector that attracts **6 million visitors per year** in France;
- a unique opportunity to **promote the Dordogne** on the international stage.

PROGRAM IN SUMMARY

Pre-Congress – September 22 to 24, 2026

- Welcome in Périgueux
- Visits: Domme Cave, Tourtoirac, Hautefort Castle, Milandes Castle
- Dinners and time to explore the region

Congress – September 25 to 29, 2026

- Opening ceremony and press conference
- ISCA General Assemblies
- Scientific sessions: Dominique Genty, Laurent Bruxelles, Frédéric Plassard
- International presentations ("Around the World")
- Visits: Lascaux, Roque Saint-Christophe, Rouffignac, Maxange, Proumeyssac, Villars, Maison Forte de Reignac...
- Gala dinner at Voulez-Vous

Post-Congress – September 30 to October 1, 2026

- Sarlat
- Lacave Cave
- Rocamadour
- Pech Merle Cave
- Cognac Cave



CONTACTS PRESSE

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