



PRESS RELEASE

Palais Cambon, 3 September 2025

Public thematic report

NOTRE-DAME CATHEDRAL CONSTRUCTION SITE

This third report by the *Cour des comptes*, following those of 2020 and 2022, comes just as the towers of Notre-Dame, closed since the fire on 15 April 2019, are preparing to reopen for the European Heritage Days on 20 and 21 September. The *Cour des comptes* reviewed the completion of the restoration work following the fire, as it did for the conservation work, by examining the conditions under which the work was carried out and its financial cost in relation to the forecast amount. The *Cour des comptes* also paid particular attention to the framework for the reopening of the cathedral, drawing on lessons from the past, both in terms of the resolution of relations between the State and the Diocese of Paris, and in terms of the new fire safety and security measures and their management. The report provides updated details of the proceeds of the national fundraising campaign and the amounts raised from patrons by the foundations and the public establishment in charge of the restoration, and looks at how the funds were used in accordance with legislative provisions. The *Cour des comptes* also calls for lessons to be learnt from the management of this exceptional situation and project in terms of public action, and proposes a global approach to cultural and tourist development with a view to the creation of the museum on the work announced by the President of the Republic.

The completion of restoration work and the reopening of the cathedral

The reconstruction and restoration work carried out since 2022 to reopen the cathedral by the scheduled date of 2024 (after the work to safeguard the building, completed in 2021), has been completed on schedule and on budget. The restoration work on the parts of the monument directly affected by the fire was carried out by the public establishment responsible for the conservation and restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral (*Établissement Public Rebâtir Notre-Dame de Paris* - EP-RNDP) in compliance with the laws applicable to historic monuments. The close coordination between the work carried out under the responsibility of the public agency and that carried out by the Diocese, as well as the responsiveness of the public establishment to the inevitable unexpected developments in a project of this scale, also played a key role. The cost of this phase of the work was estimated in May 2022 at €552 million, including €125.4 million in provisions covering price increases (€66.5 million), contingencies and unforeseen events (€38.63 million) and calendar risks (€20.22 million). Not all the provisions set aside have been used, leaving a balance available from the proceeds of the national fundraising campaign and the contributions of major donors for a new phase of work. The reopening of the towers of Notre-Dame to visitors, scheduled to coincide with the reopening for worship on 8 December 2024, was postponed until the 2025 European Heritage Days, mainly because of flaws discovered late in the restoration of the south belfry, requiring additional work. This is why, contrary to the figures provided by the *Centre des Monuments Nationaux* (CMN) in 2022, which aimed to receive 700,000 visitors, the new visitor route will limit the number of visitors compared to the level reached before the fire, at 400,000 per year (compared to around 450,000 before 2019).

A reopening with lessons learnt from the past

The reopening of the cathedral provided an opportunity to reset the relationship between the State and the Diocese of Paris regarding non-religious uses, with an agreement that complied with the laws in force, the absence of which had been highlighted by the *Cour des comptes*. New equipment has been installed in the cathedral, including innovative fire-suppression systems, and safety measures have been reviewed. As a result, overall operating costs have doubled and are now shared between the State, the Diocese of Paris and the *Centre des Monuments Nationaux*, with a clearer breakdown.

A new phase of restoration work financed mainly by donations

As at 31 March 2024, the EP-RNDP estimated that donations to the national fund would total €843 million, slightly higher than the figure anticipated in 2020 (€825 million). The fundraising campaign organised by the three foundations was transparent as to the use to be made of the funds raised. Its management costs were very low, and donors have been kept regularly informed, both by the foundations, in compliance with their statutory obligations, and by the EP-RNDP. The funds were used in accordance with the wishes expressed by donors, with private donations allocated entirely to fire-related conservation and restoration work. At the end of the restoration work related to the fire carried out for the reopening of the cathedral, at least €140 million remains available. With the agreement of major donors, patrons and businesses, this will enable a third phase of work to be undertaken to treat issues that existed before the fire. This new phase of work will begin with the restoration of the apse, the flying buttresses and the presbytery, estimated at €51 million. The remit of the EP-RNDP, which has proved its effectiveness in managing the restoration, has been extended until 2028 and a new mission statement has been issued to its chairman.

Lessons to be learned from an exceptional project

The fact that the restoration phase after the fire was kept within budget should be emphasised. It was the result of thorough monitoring by the contracting authority and the contractor, with strong involvement from the Audit Committee and close attention from the foundations. Even though this was an exceptional project - also in terms of the commitment of the companies involved - the Ministry of Culture should draw lessons from it in terms of steering and financial management by contracting authorities for other major projects involving historic monuments. The work enabled the Ministry of Culture to commission a major archaeological dig by Inrap, which produced exceptional results. The Ministry has also classified the elements destroyed by the fire as archaeological remains. This experience should contribute to the establishment of principles applicable to conservation policy in this field. Lastly, the challenges of raising the profile of the site and attracting tourists call for a coordinated approach to the future development of the surrounding area, as well as the creation of a future museum on the work. Urgent decisions need to be made on the location of the new museum within the Hôtel-Dieu and on its size, both of which will determine the feasibility and success of the project. The establishment of an *ad hoc* public establishment to oversee the restoration work was a wise decision. In this context, the *Cour des comptes* recommends defining, by 2026, a policy on the conservation of archaeological remains that takes greater account of their cultural, heritage and scientific value; by 2025, having the State cover the cost of storing the artefacts recovered during excavations and the debris from the Notre-Dame fire; by 2026, drawing up a standard applicable to construction work at heritage sites where lead is present and used; and to decide immediately delay on the location of the museum on the work, taking into account the economic and financial viability of the project.

[Read the report](#)

The Cour des comptes ensures that public money is used properly and informs citizens accordingly.

Press contacts

Julie Poissier - Communications Director - +33 (0)6 87 36 52 21 - julie.poissier@ccomptes.fr

Mendrika Lozat-Rabenjamina – Press Relations Manager - +33 (0)6 99 08 54 99 – mendrika.lozat-rabenjamina@ccomptes.fr



4^e CAMPAGNE de participation citoyenne

de la Cour et des chambres régionales
et territoriales des comptes
du 1^{er} au 30 septembre 2025



Plateforme citoyenne
DE LA COUR ET DES CHAMBRES
RÉGIONALES ET TERRITORIALES DES COMPTES

