

FROM SUSTAINABLE SAFEGUARDING TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORIC TOWNS

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Abstract

Over the last decades, actions to maintain and preserve cultural assets have been converging with sustainable development, thus forming new policy tendencies. It gradually becomes clear that culture is closely linked to development, independently of any level of financial development and political givens of human societies. It is also realized that culture is the expression of each people's creative spirit, animating all fields of economic-productive and social life. Humanity is starting to realize that culture is a driving force behind development, while it was suggested that planning development should encompass the acknowledgment that the world heritage consists in both the natural and man-made environment. As an advisor to UNESCO for World Heritage, ICOMOS works towards this directions, consistently aiming to connect and coordinate with other non-governmental and governmental organizations, serving similar purposes. A series of decisions taken during the ICOMOS scientific meetings and conferences share these ideas. To reinforce the cultural field is currently clearly recorded on an international level, in the sense that culture must be integrated in the center of the developmental procedure and be specifically linked to economic development strategies. It is also necessary to understand cultural heritage as a principal resource, as a part of the urban ecosystem and to preserve the values of historic cities for their social, cultural and economic life. CIVVIH is working and will continue working constantly to these directions. Today culture and heritage stand out as developmental factors and poles of urban development. Cities should become the driving force behind a clever, sustainable and inclusive development.

Key words: *Agenda 21 for culture, CIVVIH ICOMOS, culture as 4th pillar of sustainable development, cultural development, Hangzhou Declaration, United Cities and Local Governments, UN Sustainable Development Goals, World Decade for Cultural Development.*

During World War II, the historic centers of Warsaw London, St. Petersburg, and Dresden as other cities were ruined by bombarding. Thousands of works of art, rare books, manuscripts, paintings, statues and other valuable objects were taken from museums, libraries, residences and private collections in France, the former USSR, Belgium, Poland and were in a risk of losing.

Extensive destructions, as well as the loss of movable works of art during World War II sensitized scientists and experts, as the loss of historical memory is a loss of history. Consequently they took action in order to protect cultural heritage by intervening before international organizations and post-war governments, in order to establish an international legal framework for the protection of the peoples' cultural wealth in times of war.

The result of this mobilization was the inclusion of dispositions on the protection of cultural goods in the Geneva Convention (1949), which dealt with humanitarian law. The Hague Convention was signed later on (14/5/1954), under the initiative of UNESCO; this is

the Convention for the protection of cultural goods in case of Armed Conflict, which is more than ever timely this year, during which we bore witness to the merciless destruction of Cultural Heritage in Syria and Iraq. The destruction of world heritage monuments by radical fanatics which has taken place over the past few months has left us all in shock, as did the devastating earthquake at Nepal.

Cultural heritage disasters were the focus of the first convention of Protection Architects and Engineers which took place in Paris (1957), but the need to protect cultural heritage hit by World Wars has led the Architects and Specialists of Historic Buildings to adopt, within the context of their conference held in Venice in 1964, the Venice Charter and to establish ICOMOS.

This year we are celebrating fifty years from the drafting of the Venice Charter, which remains a pioneer text, as it was the first to introduce the notion of sustainability for architectural heritage, declaring that monuments should be preserved and protected, so that future generations can receive what the former ones have bequeathed to humanity. This position inspired important initiatives which ensued, such as the International Convention on the Protection of World (Natural and Cultural) Heritage, which was established in Paris in 1972 under the initiative of UNESCO.

The International Convention reflects the European dual tradition, expressed through the convergence of two theoretical schools. The first emanates from the international movement of architects and experts on heritage protection, which resulted in an organized, non-governmental movement with the declaration of the Venice Charter and the founding of the International Council on Monuments and Sites-ICOMOS. The second comes from the international conferences on the protection of nature, which gave birth to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) aiming to protect natural monuments, which must be bequeathed unscathed to future generations.

This is a deeply pioneering step, which innovates as it unites *nature and culture* under the notion of world heritage, in the sense that it needs to pass on unharmed to our posterity.

In the wake of the energy crisis in the 1970's, the effectiveness of post-war development myths began to be questioned. Technology's positive results are being questioned, as well as the risks threatening the natural and cultural environment, such as the uncalculated exploitation of natural resources, polluting industrial activity, and warfare.

The perspective of the *quiet spring* troubles humanity, which agonizes for the lot of the natural environment, while new, global demands are on the rise, concerning the quality of living, safety, equality in modern society, as well as by the relation between developmental procedures and culture. It gradually becomes clear that culture is closely linked to development, independently of any level of financial development and political givens of human societies. It is also realized that culture is the expression of each people's creative spirit, animating all fields of economic-productive and social life.

The World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997) was of particular importance, as international research and cultural collaborations which took place at that time proved that culture can become a **social regulator and that it can be capitalized** as a developmental force.



The World Conference on Environment which took place at Rio in 1992 was an important milestone, since the Agenda 21 declares that: development should be based on the

best possible and well thought-out use of each region's material and human resources. It also acknowledges that cultural heritage is not a renewable asset. A substantial conversion took place at Rio, which was confirmed by the 22nd principle of the Declaration of the United Nations, concerning the environment and development: the policy on the sustainability of the natural environment meets the policy on the sustainability of cultural heritage. Humanity was finally starting to realize that culture is a driving force behind development, while it was suggested that planning development should encompass the acknowledgment that the world heritage consists in both the natural and man-made environment.

The definition of development in article 3 of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) largely corresponds to the role which we would like to give heritage during the developmental procedure, in its broader sense: «development is not only considered to be financial development, but also a means to achieve a more satisfactory mental, emotional, moral and spiritual existence».

The Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) acknowledged cultural diversity as the fourth pillar of sustainable development, along with the traditional three pillars of Economy, Society and Environment.

In the 65/166 Decree for Culture and Development, approved by the United Nations General Assembly in February 2011, as proposed by UNESCO, the role played by culture in development is further enhanced, noting «that culture [whose part is culture] is a basic component of human development ... offered for financial development and the possession of developmental procedures » RIO+20 moves in the same direction.

As an advisor to UNESCO for World Heritage, ICOMOS works towards these directions, consistently aiming to connect and coordinate with other non-governmental and governmental organizations, serving similar purposes. A series of decisions taken during the ICOMOS scientific meetings and conferences share the central idea of cultural sustainability. The 17th General Assembly Scientific Symposium ICOMOS took place in Paris, on November 2011 under the theme *Heritage, a driver of development* and it concluded in a Statement of Principles and Recommendations. This document declared that the relationship between cultural heritage and development should be considered an advantage, not only for protection and its preservation and for the propagation of its values, but mostly for societies' cultural, social and financial development.

The Paris Symposium broadly recognized, through the documentation of 500 scientific papers that heritage (also being the repository of humanity's historic, cultural and social memory, preserved through authenticity, integrity and «genus loci» -) constitutes a crucial facet of the developmental procedure and financial development. It was further acknowledged that, in participating within the context of sustainable development, cultural heritage contributes to social cohesion, prosperity, creativity and financial drive, and it contributes to promoting understanding among communities.

The 18th World Scientific Symposium of ICOMOS took place in Florence in November of 2014 under the subject *Heritage and Landscape as Human Values* was also an extraordinary occasion for the ICOMOS community to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Venice Charter and the 20th Anniversary of the Nara Document. We therefore celebrate both our own founding act, demonstrating its potential, and also a key document resulting from many scientific and philosophical debates on authenticity, that has promoted the diversity of cultural expression.

The Florence Declaration encourages further questioning on deontology as well as the management procedure for cultural heritage. It is mostly however encouraging the dialogue on sustainable development, placing man at center stage, and it acknowledges that, through

their cultural diversity, heritage and landscape values are conditions for the quality of human living.

The 49 General Assembly resolutions covered administrative issues, like the required modernization of the Statutes and Ethical principles, as well as various issues like

- The effect of the economic crisis on heritage,
- The repercussions from armed conflict, especially in Syria Iraq Ukraine, and
- The inclusion of culture and cultural heritage in the post-2014 United National Development Agenda,

In response to today’s challenges, the main aim of the 2014 Symposium was to facilitate the inclusion and participation of people and groups from a variety of cultures and to move forward in defining principles, strategies, standards and practices that can contribute both to the recognition of the human values of cultural heritage, as well as to safeguarding and encouraging cultural diversity, working together to develop the necessary organizational frameworks and skills. These principles have been well expressed in previous international documents and founding charters on safeguarding and protecting human rights and cultural heritage.

ICOMOS views the Symposium theme in the context of sustainable development (UN Sustainable Development Goals), making up for the lost opportunity caused by the exclusion of culture from the UN Millennium Development Goals. To this end CIVVIH supported the relevant ICOMOS General Assembly Resolution 18GA 2014/37 “Ensuring that culture and cultural heritage are acknowledged in the proposed Goals and Targets on Sustainable Development for the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda”.



UNESCO is already working towards this end through its contributions to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which were discussed in October 2014 in Florence. ICOMOS, together with some of the world's largest cultural, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, has discussed these issues, presenting its reflections on them at the recent Symposium.

Along with the issue’s scientific course, policy texts of international governmental organizations are gradually including the admission that culture must constitute the fourth pillar of sustainable development. The most important among these texts are the following:

- Agenda 21 on culture, managed since 2004 by the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in collaboration with UNESCO. This is a tool concerning the reinforcement of the role of culture in urban policies, as well as the promotion of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development.



- The 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions referenced integration of culture in sustainable Development. A

convention on the protection and promotion of different cultural expressions mentions the integration of culture in sustainable development.

- 2009 Operational guidelines developed for Article 13 of UNESCO Convention (on integration of culture in sustainable development)2009 UNESCO Experts Meeting discussed four-pillar model in development of a new cultural policy profile
- 2009 United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)published report Culture and Sustainable Development
- 2010 November United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) approved policy statementon ‘Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development’
- 2010 December United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution on Culture an Development
- An important step is the declaration of the 3rd World Conference of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (17th November 2010) which took place in Mexico City under the theme «Culture: the fourth pillar of sustainable development» which suggested:
 - integrating the cultural dimension in the design of all types of policies and programs for sustainable development
 - the two-way and double approach of the development between culture and sustainable development through: a) developing a solid policy/cultural field and b) supporting cultural dimensions in all public policies.

A next important step is the UNESCO *Hangzhou Declaration* «placing culture at the hurt of sustainable policies» (2013). Consequently, the tendency to reinforce the cultural field is currently clearly recorded on an international level, in the sense that culture must be integrated in the center of the developmental procedure and be specifically linked to economic development strategies.It is also acknowledged that it is vital to understand cultural heritage as a principal resource, as a part of the urban ecosystem. This is a condition in order to ensure the harmonious development of the city and of its periphery. It is moreover recognized that it is necessary to preserve the values of historic cities for their social, cultural and economic life. Besides, their examples often are good practices for sustainability and they constitute important models for resilience, inspiring and teaching humanity on the important lessons towards sustainable development.



At this point it should be mentioned that one follows the directions CIVVIH, which has suggested two important texts for work directions:

the *Charter for the conservation of historic cities and urban areas* (1987)

and *The Valletta Principles for the Safeguarding and Management of Historic Cities, Towns and Urban Areas* (2011).



The first, and even more so the second document, as well as the committee’s entire scientific work acknowledges that the understanding of heritage as an essential resource, part of the urban ecosystem, is fundamental. This understanding must be respected in order to ensure a harmonious development of the town and its territory. It is also recognized that it is necessary to safeguard the values of historical towns and their setting, especially to their integration in the social, cultural and economic life of our times. In this context a great importance is given from CIVVIH- ICOMOS on the notion of sustainable development.

Therefore many directives on architectural planning and urban intervention are proposed from CIVVIH ICOMOS in the basis on no demolition policy and rather, on preservation of the urban heritage limited resources. The CIVVIH- ICOMOS has also acknowledged that historic cities offer various good practices of sustainability and they constitute important models for resilience, inspiring humanity and teaching important lessons for the direction of the sustainable development of urban areas.

The CIVVIH continues to work on these issues and it has organized the following symposiums on relevant issues:

CIVVIH

1. “The historic city, a reference model for urban sustainable development policies”, Valletta Malta, 7-11 April 2010





2. "The role of the integrated conservation of cultural heritage for a creative, resilient and sustainable city", Naples Italy, 3-5 September 2012



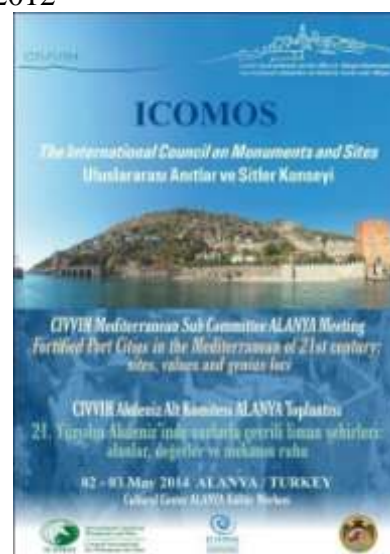
3. "Retaining Authenticity in Historic Cities and Urban Areas", Budapest/Visegrad Hungary, 20- 22 September 2013

CIVVIH Mediterranean Sub Committee Meeting:

4. "Management plans for Mediterranean Historic Cities and Sustainability", Nicosia Cyprus, 18-20 November 2010

5. "Multilayered Historic Towns", Izmir Turkey, 18-20 May 2012

6. "Fortified Port cities in the Mediterranean of 21st century: Sites, values and genius loci", Alanya Turkey 2-3 May 2014



Over the last decades, actions to maintain and preserve cultural assets have been converging with sustainable development, thus forming new policy tendencies.

Therefore CIVVIH considers that culture and heritage already stand out as developmental factors and poles of urban development. CIVVIH believes that historic cities should become the driving force behind a clever, sustainable and inclusive development. They must be areas of culture as well as attractive venues for living, working and investing.

CIVVIH has already accepted that creative economy is a new developmental parameter and that creative professions are linked to cultural industry or to various art forms, and that, according to new tendencies in the competitiveness of cities, they are the creative class, the human resource which can contribute to the cities' upgrading.



photo of Athens historic centre, by author

Sustainability becomes a dynamic creative force which, among others, presupposes social consent. The integrated protection of heritage is inscribed within this context and its management problems can be encountered wisely.

Through acknowledging and protecting their past, societies can get inspired for their future perspectives for cultural sustainability:



photo of Athens historic centre, by author

- _ Culture as an asset (tangible as well as intangible)
- _ Culture as a way of life (a system of social relations)
- _ Culture as a vehicle towards sustainability
- _ Culture as a creative expression, offering knowledge concerning viability
- _ Culture as an adjustment procedure based on complexity and mutual dependence.

CIVVIH is following the trail of ancient philosophical thinking, as we delve into the timely issue of this meeting *Heritage, driving force of sustainable development for historic cities and urban landscapes* in two sections, in order to contribute to this broader thinking, as suggested by our organization ICOMOS, within the perspective of the goals of the millennium and of Habitat III:

A. *Spatial transformation and the management of the landscape of historic towns, cities and urban areas.*

B. *Sustainable tourism development on historic towns, cities and urban areas.*

....Ζὰς ποιεῖ φᾶρος μέγα τε καὶ καλὸν
καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ποικίλλει Γῆν καὶ Ὠγηνὸν καὶ τὰ Ὠγηνοῦ δώματα

**...Gifts that Earth delivers should be used with respect and determination
in order to be sustainable...**

Ferekides, ancient philosopher from Syros,
teacher of Pythagoras



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