

ICOMOS ISC on Theory and Philosophy of Conservation and Restoration;
8th Annual Meeting & Scientific Conference, Florence, 8-9 March 2013

“The HUL Challenge, Re-assessing the Values of the Past in the Light of Contemporary Trends”

FLORENCE REMARKS ON HUL, 2013 CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING

The 8th annual meeting of the ICOMOS ISC on Theory and Philosophy took place in Florence, from 8 to 9 March 2013. The purpose of the Meeting was to build on the debate of the ISC at its previous sessions – at last "Heritage Under Pressure - Perspectives of HUL" Baku (Azerbaijan), April 26th-28th, 2012 and discuss theoretical bases for the implementation of the HUL approach in the management of historic urban landscapes in view of maintaining the qualities and characteristics of protected monuments and sites in a complex management environment. The Meeting also discussed case studies geo-culturally, ranging from Africa and Asia to North America raising issues concerning cultural mapping, perceptions and entitlements of heritage community facing intense development pressures, affecting also OUVs and the nature of theory. The participants of the Meeting express their grateful appreciation to the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco for hosting the Committee.

WE THE PARTICIPANTS ATTENDING THE MEETING:

Recognize the importance of the UNESCO 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, to meet the current challenges in the planning, conservation and management of historic urban territories with their surroundings in their vastly contrasting geo-cultural, political and developmental contexts across the world, defined as HUL: *The historic urban landscape is the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of “historic centre” or “ensemble” to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting.*

Take note of the international doctrine concerning urban heritage previously adopted by ICOMOS and UNESCO. We also note the initiatives by ICOMOS ISC's and the Council of Europe, including inter alia the definition of 'integrated conservation' by the Council of Europe in 1975, 'urban conservation' by UNESCO in 1976, 'cultural landscape', adopted by World Heritage Committee in 1992, and Council of Europe in 1995, 'authenticity' and 'cultural and heritage diversities' in the 1994 Nara Document, the concept of 'landscape' in Council of Europe 2000 Landscape Convention, the notion of the 'setting' of heritage sites, including Cultural Routes, in the ICOMOS 2005 Xi'an Declaration, the concept of 'heritage community' in the 2005 Faro Convention and with reservations the directives of urban development and historic context in the Vienna Memorandum. We further note other nationally adopted concepts, such as the notion of '*historic territory*' in the 1990 Italian Gubbio Charter and '*machinami*' in the Machinami Charter of Japan ICOMOS, in 2000.

Express serious concern over the continuing profound social and economic changes in society resulting from changing value judgements and their negative impacts on protected tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage as indicated in the HUL Recommendation. At the same time, the surrounding territories risk social and spatial fragmentation due to excessive urbanisation and suburbanisation, densification and sprawl with loss of rural and natural character and specificity of place. Furthermore, the capacity of the public sector is often weakening, with the lack of involvement of a more heritage supportive community which leaves the possibility open for unsustainable practices, speculation and un-controlled development of individual commercial interests, frequently in a Neo-Liberal context

Emphasise the urgency to undertake decisive actions to counterbalance such trends in the spirit of HUL by developing the relevant mechanisms for its implementation in diverse geo-cultural contexts.

WE FURTHERMORE PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE DECISIONS OF THE UNESCO GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN THEIR ACCLAMATION OF THE HUL RECOMMENDATION.

From Theory to Practice: The purpose of the research is to move from theory to practice, and to provide theoretically and philosophically sound references for the development of necessary control mechanisms, planning and management tools in urban conservation. This verification and testing of suitable planning and management instruments needs for the HUL approach to be carried out in concert with other ICOMOS ISCs, such as CIAV, CIF, CIIC, CIVVIH, ISC20C, ISEC, as well as other international bodies.

Cultural Heritage is the result of recognition. It includes those parts of heritage that are protected by law, some also recognized for their OUV, as well as parts that relate to community at large, and that may not be covered by any formal protection status. The HUL approach will touch on these issues aiming at an overall guidance in planning and management of the territory that forms the context for recognized heritage areas. Therefore, the UNESCO Recommendation on HUL should always be taken as a fundamental reference in the organisation and implementation of development processes, with Management Plans and related Action Plans.

Heritage Specificity: Each historic area within its setting has its specific qualities related to the historical stratigraphy and relevant cultural, social, economic and geographic conditions. The knowledge and understanding of these qualities needs properly qualified professionals, who must be structurally involved in deciding the establishment of appropriate policies and strategies to be implemented through place-specific tools aiming at culturally and environmentally sustainable decision making.

Continuity and Change: Historic Cities are hubs, subject to dynamic changes, which may vary depending on a variety of factors, such as economic and social pressures, demography and migrations. In such processes, culture should be identified as a fundamental factor and guidance for the continuity of living traditions, cultural diversity and the conservation of cultural properties. Based on the HUL approach, this may require corrective actions in land use, functionality and development strategies, equity, cultural context and social inclusion, environmental protection and sustainability, civic engagement, local governance, and community empowerment. The processes could involve the reclamation and regeneration of place through relevant cultural expressions.

Capacity Building: The decision makers should drive towards a leading political vision of HUL, together with professional conservationists. Capacity building aims at better awareness in the development and implementation of appropriate policies and management instruments. To be effective, the vision must be based on social justice, cultural context, the recognition of rights and correctly informed involvement of the heritage community to be sustained by educational programmes at all levels

Clarification of concepts: Taking into account the ambition of the HUL approach to deal with the broader territorial panorama, the Committee encourages research in the integrity related to urban morphology, inclusive of cultural context, social-functional and structural-historical dimensions, as well as the relationships of public and private spaces, and land uses. The impacts of change in urban morphology and typology are bound to be felt particularly in evaluating visual integrity both within the area concerned and in its relationship with the surroundings. Therefore the Committee promotes, as a priority, research in the application of the fundamental concepts and theories in relation to the HUL approach in general and criterion (vii) of the World Heritage Operational Guidelines in

particular. Special attention on this way is to be given to the fundamental aspects of authenticity and integrity in their manifold material, immaterial and visual dimensions.

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