

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE (CDCPP)

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Medium-term orientations and perspectives for cultural heritage activities in the Council of Europe

DOCUMENT FOR DECISION

Items 5.3.1 of the draft agenda

The Committee:

- **adopted** the document;
- **supported** the Secretariat in the implementation of these orientations and perspectives, and in the development of heritage activities as part of the “Technical Cooperation and Consultancy Programme related to the integrated conservation of the cultural heritage”;
- **instructed** its Bureau to decide upon the specific arrangements to be put in place to follow up these activities.

1. Context and mission of the heritage sector

The Council Europe's reform is a drive to refocus on the Organisation's historic leading role in capturing societal trends and disseminating European ideas. It is through standard-setting instruments and ethical and regulatory principles, continuously set-up and updated, that the fundamental values which establish European identity and unity are fostered.

With this in mind, the Council of Europe's programme of activities relating to cultural heritage has been placed under the Organisation's "Democracy" pillar. These activities, together with those relating to culture and landscape, are being overseen in 2012-2013 by the new "Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape" (CDCPP).

The adopted Conventions and Recommendations, together with the field actions carried out over the years, have led to results which prove the significant impact of the Council of Europe's heritage approach on "democratic governance" and the "development of sustainable democratic societies". These two main priorities of the Organisation underline the necessary direct involvement of citizens in the conception and management of development projects in order to contribute effectively to the creation of cohesive societies and sustainable communities where people want to live and work, now and in the future. In this sense, the respect for our common heritage and cultural diversity are factors for human, social and economic development, and a way of reinforcing the human rights policy and democracy.

Heritage is thus placed at the heart of the political and ethical values of the Council of Europe. The heritage approach consolidates the Organisation's capacity to respond to challenges and risks affecting the whole of Europe.

2. Programmes of activities for 2012-2013

As part of the mandate given to the CDCPP, the 2012-2013 work programme adopted by the Committee of Ministers refers directly to implementation and follow-up of the cultural heritage conventions. The following three goals (2.1 to 2.3), implemented through three specific programmes of activities, will therefore contribute in a very practical way to the Council of Europe's objectives and priorities by seeking to ensure better management of cultural diversity and to encourage new democratic practices.

Exemplary field action will continue to ensure effective "assistance to countries", to "test" new approaches, to inspire regulatory principles and different development models based on the sustainable use of cultural and heritage resources, to "set up dialogue mechanisms" amongst stakeholders, to "foster participation" of citizens in societal decisions, and finally to "coordinate" with a variety of partners in order to be disseminated to all member States and civil society. This process reinforces the Organisation's capacity to export these new models to the European neighbourhood regions. It also increases opportunities for dialogue and renewed partnership with the European Union, considering that a better complementarity between the two main European organisations is indispensable to address the needs and expectations of member States. This will progressively lead to improved coordination between the actions undertaken by the various stakeholders involved in local and regional development, spatial planning, urban management, economic processes, and so on.

Realistically, the Council of Europe can address its short- and medium-term objectives for these specific fields of competences by organising a more rational share of responsibilities through coordination and innovative partnerships with public and private bodies that have successfully taken over specific complementary roles. This means that the Council of Europe will therefore be in a position to invest more in regaining its essential political role while impacting more practically on European citizens' well-being.

2.1. The Council of Europe as the guardian of common European standards and a political and institutional framework for producing new common references

Programme “Principles and Values”

Objective

To increase the coherence in member States’ policies regarding CoE and EU ongoing joint efforts to develop the role of heritage to favour the development of effective democracy, good governance, improvement of the living environment and development of the idea of “living together” based on mutual understanding, respect and tolerance.

Actions in 2012-2013

- Assessment of existing documents/reports related to field projects and to the impact of the heritage activities.
- Identification of the major transversal issues/new ideas according to the evolution of Council of Europe priorities, member States’ needs and EU strategy (economic impact of heritage, etc.) to be explored as part of specific partnerships and/or field actions.
- Set up a European hub for reflexion and the exchange of experience, where contributions from the external stakeholders can converge and be transformed into multilateral political tools.
- Identification of “best practice” and “case studies” to back-up the references.

Results

- New interpretation of CoE references and new ideas guide the implementation of the “programmes”.
- An operational mega-network is created, including targeted terms of reference with key stakeholders/partners (externalisation).
- Assessments of all the accumulated information from the field actions and reference documents are disseminated. CoE values and principles are illustrated and promoted through best practice and case studies (data base and publications).
- Joint transversal thematic initiatives are launched involving external partners.
- Recommendations are addressed to the CDCPP for adopting “regulatory principles” and priority subjects for transversal and political follow-up.

2.2. The Council of Europe as a mentoring platform for the convergence and harmonisation of legal and institutional practices

Programme “Policies and Strategies”

Objective

To provide member States with strategic guidelines and recommendations related to integrated heritage conservation, post-conflict/post-catastrophe reconstruction and urban regeneration, in order to improve their operational capacities and legal standards.

Activities 2012-2013

- Legal and institutional cooperation at the request of the member States; assessment of the situation, advice, assistance to national working groups.
- Project needs assessments carried out systematically before the implementation of any new pilot project, to identify the main issues at stake, the problems that the pilot project can help to solve, the political challenges to be endorsed by beneficiary countries, indicators of success and assumptions.

- Evaluation of the impact of the pilot projects: validation of the national/regional strategies elaborated; mid term and final evaluation of results.
- Thematic transversal research to be published as “Guidelines”.

Results

- Institutional Capacity Building is increased with a contribution to legal reforms in beneficiary countries.
- Needs assessments and log frames are set up for pilot projects.
- Evaluation reports and thematic studies are drawn up for consideration by the CDCPP.
- The extensive European data base is updated, analysed, summarised and disseminated through different communication channels, including consolidation of the HEREIN (European Heritage Network Database) and publication of “Guidelines”.

2.3. The Council of Europe as a cooperation and innovation framework tackling social and cultural challenges

Programme “Field Action”

Objective

To carry out “European pilot projects” related to integrated heritage conservation, post-conflict / post-catastrophe reconstruction and urban regeneration, responding to member States’ needs when implementing the European Conventions.

Activities in 2012-2013

- Regional projects: South-East and Black Sea/South Caucasus (Ljubljana Process II, Local Development Pilot Projects, Pilot Project for the Rehabilitation of Cultural Heritage in Historic Towns).
- Technical Cooperation: Local Development Pilot Project in Limassol (Cyprus).
- Neighbourhood projects (for example Tunisia).
- Pilot projects to address post-conflict/post-catastrophe situations: “EU/CoE Support to the Promotion of Cultural Diversity in Kosovo”¹, Nicosia Buffer Zone, Rehabilitation of Lorca (Spain) following the 2011 earthquake (and others).

Results

- Institutional capacities are increased in the countries.
- New national, regional or local development policies and action programmes are developed.
- Practical and innovative technical responses are provided to specific problems (case studies).
- Practical diagnoses (strengths and weaknesses) are made on how the conventions are implemented.
- Snow-ball dynamics are created to generate new projects inspired by previous experience.
- Effective European solidarity is increased towards the beneficiary countries requesting assistance.
- Experimentation and implementation of innovative approaches and models which enrich the best European practices.
- Consolidation and new partnerships (including innovative financial mechanisms) are designed for implementing new types of projects.

¹ All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nation’s Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

3. Conclusion: cultural heritage activities from 2014 and beyond

The 2012-2013 work programme in the field of heritage puts the Council of Europe in a position to further invest in regaining its essential political role, focusing on updating European standards and references in line with the needs of countries and the results reached in collaboration with chosen partners. Initiating such a reorganisation of cultural heritage activities from 2012 involves defining and gradually implementing main lines for transversal action, combining a number of fields of activities for which the Council of Europe has an added value on the international scene:

“Democratic governance and citizen participation for improving quality of life”

This is the first main line of transversal action proposed which underlines the interest of citizens' participation in the sustainable management of their living environment. In an advanced democracy, individuals' needs which are recognised as human rights (e.g. individual development and creativity, safe and healthy housing, inclusive and safe urban spaces, access to clean energy) must be met more effectively for stable and coherent communities in the face of social change. The active involvement of citizens at all stages of the development projects is the main value for local democracy because it affects people's day-to-day lives. At the same time, the quality of spatial development is a key factor on the ground for progress in democratic and “good” governance, bringing the Council of Europe's specific “human development” dimension to regenerate the concept of “territorial cohesion”.

This transversal action fosters a certain way of “living together”, insisting on the quality of relationships, not only between individuals and population groups, but also between citizens, ensuring a better mutual understanding and tolerance, preserving ethnic, cultural and religious diversity through permanent dialogue, setting up more cohesive development approaches and effective democracy.

“Post-conflict / post-catastrophe management and dissemination of development models for stable relations within Europe's neighbouring regions”

This is the second main line of transversal action proposed. It underlines the collective responsibility in terms of European solidarity towards those communities not only suffering from the violence or destruction inherent in conflicts but also from natural disasters, climate change and even economic crises.

This transversal action, based on practical field projects, implies reflection processes for elaborating models and the sharing of experience relating to the different areas of development strategies (rehabilitation of urban or monumental heritage and the revitalisation of communities). It includes a wide dissemination of models and innovative partnerships with other organisations to build capacities and confidence, which result in effective, transparent and accountable democratic institutions, pragmatic intercultural dialogue responsive to the needs and aspirations of all, and the expression of differences.

The proposed reorganisation facilitates and encourages gradual transversality between different fields of competences for which the Council of Europe has gained wide recognition. It will thus be firmly pursued by developing a new generation of projects, for instance on “urban rehabilitation for a better quality of life in cities”, “renewed cultural environments for a better way of living together”, or “territorial approaches for managing global change”.