

LA CONVENTION-CADRE  
SUR LA VALEUR DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL  
POUR LA SOCIÉTÉ

FRAMEWORK CONVENTION  
ON THE VALUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE  
FOR SOCIETY

## Faro free Applications



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# Heritage walk

### Brief description

■ A “Heritage walk” is conceived by and with those who live and work in a territory or have a special affinity with it. The walk is devised by combining the stories of all the participants in the context of research work drawing on scientific sources and also on the life experiences of local residents, on the discovery of local curiosities and on the accumulated knowledge of the places concerned. Such a walk can take many forms with the aim of experiencing, documenting and living a territory in unusual ways: guided tours run by heritage communities, sensitive walks run by artists, walks run by authors and visits to the homes of residents in their own neighbourhoods.

### Tutor for the application

■ Christine Breton, honorary heritage curator and doctor of history [cbreton2@wanadoo.fr]

### Reference sites

■ Marseilles, neighbourhoods concerned by the Major Urban Project (Grand projet de Ville – GPV).

### Background

■ A European experimental mission to apply the principles of integrated heritage conservation in Marseilles was launched in 1996, involving the co-ordination and creation of networks with civil society players, support and assistance for the heritage communities thus established, scientific research and monitoring with local residents and heritage professionals, co-ordination with the scientific authority and Council of Europe departments, dissemination of legal instruments such as the Faro Convention and the co-production of events.

■ Since the year 2000, in the context of the European Heritage Days, the public has been invited to discover the heritage communities’ work by participating in a series of Heritage Walks, which have gained in popularity with each passing year. These walks have become widespread in the Marseilles area, and the standards governing their organisation were codified in 2009 so that the concept

could be freely disseminated in France and Italy via Wikipedia. This concept was used in Venice to develop and implement some fifteen heritage walks. In 2012, it served as a basis for the implementation of a Leonardo training programme for 12 urban heritage guides, organised by the Marseille-Provence 2013 European Capital of Culture association.

### Tutor’s comments

■ In September 2000, we organised our first heritage walk, open free of charge to the public. Our meeting point was the coastal path in Marseilles. It was the period of the European Heritage Days. We were a little worried about this unknown concept, but certain of our route and of the stories we were going to tell, because the harvest had been good: we had organised 10 workshops with photos, documents, souvenirs and surveys to trigger memories of the people and the events involved in the history of the girls’ school of a working class neighbourhood of Marseilles: Saint-André. There were about ten women present, all former pupils of this primary school, and myself, the heritage curator. I was assisting them with the project and I was just as worried as they were, because, with no pre-established method or model, I bore the responsibility for this public venture and did not want to disappoint the women concerned.

■ We had not advertised the event. We were waiting there on the pavement with our foolhardy smiles. The street is not a collective space for women, who do not hang around there. This time we were in a group and people were looking at us. We set off on time. Four people from the neighbourhood had joined us, and we were disappointed because, while we were working out the route to follow through the streets, the residents we had encountered had told us that they wanted to meet up with us that morning. We walked up from the shoreline, closed off by the wire fencing surrounding the commercial port area, towards the school run by the nuns, then the Fellen school, housed in a building rented from a former pharmacist, the de Pouillon school, built in 1954, then the school built of shacks for the children of the large urban slums. By the time we reached our destination there were about fifty of us, happy to be there, feeling proud and independent.

Through the chance communication process of word of mouth, we had gathered together a number of women still living in the neighbourhood, whose attitude was rather derisive and sceptical but who assumed their past, some women formerly of the neighbourhood who had gone to live elsewhere following the sudden deindustrialisation process, family members or friends of these women and a few people curious to learn what was going on. This led to an exchange of souvenirs ... and of addresses.

■ Afterwards things became easy, and the method stayed the same for ten years: regular collective workshops were held in the winter to identify the content, then we scouted the area in the spring to find places to visit, carried out archival research and verifications in the summer, then rehearsed the route and organised the walks open to the public, coinciding with the European Heritage Days, in the autumn.

■ I have not forgotten our shared fears that morning in September 2000; it was a founding experience and a test that others may be spared following the adoption of the Faro Convention. The Convention allows those of us who “count for nothing” to rely on a common legal instrument, which was thirty years in the making for the “good of society”. It permits the application of an integrated approach to the heritage, and saves cobbling together one’s own approach. As a curator, it permits me to exercise my public responsibilities. It is now up to heritage professionals to seize the impetus and to breath new life into the heritage walks, which embody the spirit of Faro. For us this entails a dual research approach: slow, step by step upstream research to discover the most distant source of the concepts of the heritage and of a museum, heritage with a capital H and museum with a capital M, as imprinted on our collective psyche; and also research to identify the implications downstream, the possible ways in which the heritage will be transformed and the most uncertain future projections.

## Implementation process and conditions

### Stage one – theoretical discovery:

- ▶ Hold meetings with experts – historians, scientists and so on – with whom an initial reconnaissance can be made of the possible themes selected by the author and the possible route (involving a field trip)
- ▶ Understand local priorities linked to the chosen themes
- ▶ Research and document each theme.

### Stage two – sensitive discovery:

- ▶ Discover the route alone and identify places that awaken emotions, convey meanings or offer surprises, especially by identifying and discovering what is closed, forbidden or concealed.
- ▶ Ask local residents and users of the sites along the route for information concerning these places and the possibilities of organising visits of the premises or of presenting them.
- ▶ Identify three or four priority sites, those of particular significance or associated with key testimonies.

It is at this stage that the pleasure aspect of the walk, its content and its rhythm are identified. The testimonies may take the form of personal accounts, pictures of sites, sound recordings and so on.

### Stage three – deconstruction:

- ▶ The chosen priorities are verified with persons familiar with the neighbourhood itself: users, officials, residents.

- ▶ Identify what is important in their eyes and what was deemed important in theoretical terms.

This stage makes it possible to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct the walk, so that it is as well integrated as possible in the local context. It also helps to identify people who can intervene in the course of the walk (at a given site or along a section of the walk, but not throughout the walk, which is not a guided tour).

### Stage four – implementation:

- ▶ Identify a key theme for the walk (sorting through the possible themes and choosing just one, as it is not possible to cover everything in a single walk).
- ▶ Clarify the target audience and number of participants: local residents, the general public, school pupils, etc.
- ▶ Trace the route while identifying key sites, persons who can intervene and operational aspects (duration, points of passage, authorisations needed). Those who intervene should not be specialists or heritage experts, but people who keep the heritage alive and live it on a daily basis: residents, business people, pensioners and so on.
- ▶ Prepare the content of the interventions with all concerned. Each visit or discussion should not exceed 10 minutes. An intervention is not a lecture but a discussion concerning a place or a person.
- ▶ Set aside time for informal discussion at the end of the walk or arrange for the walkers and those who intervene to take a drink or a meal together, and so on.

### Stage five – organisation:

- ▶ Prepare a few illustrations of the key sites identified: maps or floor plans, photographs of residents, iconography and so on.
- ▶ Preparation: time the actual walk so as to know its duration and the time needed at each stop-off point. The choice of the starting point is also very important as the first signal sent to participants.
- ▶ Identify a point of contact for possible feedback from participants (email address).
- ▶ Prepare means of communication.

### Stage six – sustainability:

- ▶ Plan to record the testimonies (video or sound recordings and written documents), gather and classify information and other materials (photos, images, plans).
- ▶ Exploit this knowledge using media such as Google Earth (which could show the route), Wikipedia (putting information on line) or publications (books, CDs, press articles, website articles)
- ▶ European Heritage Days: this is an event which makes it possible to situate the walks in a European context and to maximise their visibility.

## The operators running the Faro application

Patrimoines et création 1st district of Marseilles:

<http://patrimoinesetcreations23.blogspot.it/>

Association Bel Horizon (Oran, Algeria):

<http://www.oran-belhorizon.com/>

Association Faro Venezia (Venice, Italy):

<http://farovenetia.wordpress.com/>

Hôtel du Nord cooperative (Marseilles, France):

<http://hoteldunord.coop/>