

## Faro free Applications



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# Heritage Committee

### Brief description

The meetings of the heritage committee bring together a number of operators (associations, groups of companies, groups of residents, etc.) having individual or collective links with a given territory. These meetings serve as a consultation, conflict management and early warning mechanism and a forum for making proposals and exchanging knowledge between citizens, their elected representatives and public bodies concerning all components of their heritage environment. This dialogue process fosters the emergence of a common vision and of structural projects.

### Tutor for the application

Pascale Reynier, elected representative with responsibility for cultural affairs at the Marseilles 8th district town hall (2008-2014) and Chair of the “Heritage Committee 15/16”.

### Reference sites

8th district of Marseilles (population 90 000).

### Background

The possibility, as an individual or group, to enhance the value of the cultural heritage through its identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation within the framework of public action<sup>1</sup>, requires scientific skills and a knowledge of administrative procedures that are mainly possessed by public bodies: research and scientific monitoring in co-operation with heritage professionals; co-ordination with scientific authorities; accompanying of archiving, classification and registration processes, preparation of exhibitions. These skills are those of scientists, historians, curators, archaeologists, geologists and so on.

In 1995, in connection with an experimental mission bringing together the Council of Europe, the Marseilles city authority and the University, a post of heritage curator was established for the northern neighbourhoods of Marseilles (8th district), then in the full throes of an urban renewal programme, with the aim of assisting

local people to showcase the local heritage. For fifteen years this curator played a public service role vis-à-vis local residents, placing his research and administrative skills at their disposal. This resulted in publications, classifications, artistic creations and new uses for the heritage involving local people.

At the end of this experimental mission, the question arose of the continuity of this public service, for which there was growing demand within the local community.

This continuity was ensured in three ways:

- ▶ Political continuity through recognition, by the mayor of the 8th district of Marseilles, of the principles of the Faro Convention;
- ▶ Public service continuity through the creation of a “heritage committee” bringing together local elected representatives and heritage operators: associations, groups of companies, groups of residents, etc.
- ▶ Scientific continuity through the mobilisation of scientists by local people, companies and associations: historians, archaeologists, geologists and so on.

In 2009 the first heritage committee was established in the 8th district of Marseilles and the mayor symbolically signed “the district authority’s instrument of accession to the principles laid down in the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society” (Faro Convention).

This heritage committee, constituting an innovative type of entity for this sector on account of its membership and its activities, played an active role in mobilising the local community to support the classification of l’Estaque train station as a historical monument, the implementation of conservation measures to safeguard heritage assets under threat, continued public access to private properties granted state protection and the inclusion in the urban planning programme of the “Aygaldes waterfall”, an abandoned natural and cultural heritage site.

To foster local economic development, in co-operation with Marseille-Provence 2013 (Marseilles was European Capital of Culture in 2013), the heritage committee facilitated co-operation between the last three soap-makers in Marseilles in a joint cultural route development project and proposed the implementation of a “guest

1. Excerpts from Articles 2 and 5 of the Faro Convention.

house" and related visitor services project (offering accommodation, guided walks, and so on), which led to the establishment of Hôtel du Nord, the first residents' co-operative in Europe.

■ In 2011 and 2012, three other district authorities in Marseilles launched the same heritage-based process.

### Tutor's comments

■ On taking up my duties as elected representative with responsibility for cultural affairs at the town hall for the 15th and 16th districts of Marseilles, I noted the residents' interest in their heritage. During a visit to the Ayalades soap factory, Ms Sama Ghali, Senator and Mayor, judiciously advised me to set up a committee so as to create synergies between all the, then dispersed, local forces.

■ I chaired this committee for five years, attempting to convene regular meetings so as to lay the foundations for robust, useful action. I regard this committee as the successor to the bodies that formerly fought for improved conditions at the level of the neighbourhoods, the individual factories or the schools. It is no myth that each improvement (whether the installation of sewers, lighting or other facilities) was achieved through years of perseverance and struggles.

■ Marseilles neglected and ignored its northern neighbourhoods for thirty years. Their residents were not just penalised, but also humiliated. Showing the other residents of Marseilles the diversity of our populations, our neighbourhoods, in other words our lives, was therefore an un hoped-for opportunity to restore our dignity. The pooling of the efforts with other town halls and our active participation in the Marseilles Forum on the Value of Heritage for Society and the Social Value of Heritage crowned the work done in the field.

■ The heritage committee, a valuable forum for participative democracy, made possible many tangible achievements. For me, the chief of these is that we made people listen to what we had to say about ourselves, our history, our environment and our lives. My greatest source of satisfaction is that other people's perception has changed, thereby restoring our forgotten ancient pride in living "here".

### Implementation process and conditions

**Political framework:** the mayor committed the district to recognise the "principles laid down in the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society" (Faro Convention) in the presence of representatives of the Council of Europe, the local authorities and the heritage communities – groups of residents, associations and businesses – involved in enhancing the value of the heritage.

This formal commitment conferred legitimacy on the integrated heritage strategy pursued at local level and established a common frame of reference. The Faro Convention seeks to promote co-operation between public bodies, citizens, elected representatives and the private sector. It provides a framework for experimenting new heritage practices. It lays down objectives, definitions and shared principles, describes the cultural heritage's contribution to society and human development and assigns shared responsibilities for the cultural heritage and public participation.

**The composition** of the heritage committee has varied from 12 to 25 members. It brings together people committed to defending their heritage environment who rarely encounter each other, whose social and geographical backgrounds differ considerably and whose interests are sometimes disparate: associations defending local living conditions; tenants' associations; groups of businesses; parents' associations; local public institutions (hospitals, etc.), cultural players involved in

heritage activities and local residents' traditional representatives in dealings with the municipality (neighbourhood committees, social workers). The committee permits a very lively form of application of the Faro Convention principles so as to solve conflicts linked to heritage management (usage, interpretation, conservation and so on) in a democratic manner.

**Organisation:** the heritage committee is chaired by the elected representative in charge of cultural affairs, whose legitimacy derives from the municipality's recognition of the Faro Convention principles. This elected representative is the guarantor of the political reference framework. The local administration provides the committee's secretariat. The heritage committee draws up an annual timetable of about half a dozen meetings. The relevant bodies are invited to attend depending on the agenda items. Select committee meetings are also held on specific subjects such as requests for classification, the development of joint cultural programmes and so on.

**Themes:** each meeting of the heritage committee addresses a specific theme, prepared by a member responsible for collecting information from the other members and from the municipality's culture department, which contacts the institutions and ad hoc partners. The agenda is distributed one month beforehand to permit the advance preparation of the meeting with residents. The meeting report is distributed one week after the meeting. Themes might include:

- ▶ Requests for classification or for the award of quality labels. A member prepares and submits the application file and the heritage committee contacts the relevant government departments. When there is a confirmed interest for the proposal, it participates in filing an official application. The process may equally lead to the withdrawal of a classification request.
- ▶ Monitoring of protected heritage sites: the heritage committee serves as an intermediary for transmitting residents' concerns about the state of protected heritage sites to the relevant government departments.
- ▶ Access to private protected heritage sites: the committee may be asked to play a mediation role when local residents wish to be granted access to privately owned protected heritage sites.
- ▶ Heritage enhancement activities: the committee chooses a common theme for the European Heritage Days event and participates in drawing up the joint programme and in the media and publicity campaign (press releases, flyers, etc.).
- ▶ Heritage and living conditions: members may refer to the committee questions linked to their living conditions and heritage environment. The committee organises round-table sessions with the relevant public bodies, holds public meetings and can facilitate studies. It also participates in raising media attention through the organisation of events and the publication of press articles.
- ▶ Economic use of the heritage: the heritage committee serves as intermediary between businesses and cultural players, and may also identify avenues for making economic use of the heritage, which it then brings to the attention of the public authorities and business circles.

### The operators running the Faro application

Heritage Committee of the Marseilles 8th district municipal authority:  
<http://www.mairie15-16.fr/?p=3357>

Patrimoine et Création, 1st district of Marseilles:  
<http://patrimoinsetcreations23.blogspot.it/>

Hôtel du Nord cooperative:

<http://hoteldunord.coop/formation/commission-patrimoine/>