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CEMAT RESOLUTION No. 2

**OF THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE
FOR SPATIAL/REGIONAL PLANNING
OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (CEMAT),**

**ON THE PAN-EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR THE RURAL HERITAGE:
PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT**

“THE RURAL HERITAGE AS A FACTOR OF TERRITORIAL COHESION”

*Document by the CEMAT Secretariat of the Council of Europe
Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Spatial Planning Division
Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage*

Recommendation Rec. (2002) 1 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the CEMAT “Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent” recognises that the enhanced value of the cultural heritage, which increases the appeal of localities and regions for investors, tourists and the general public by enhancing the cultural heritage makes an important contribution to economic development and to strengthening regional identity.

This Resolution contributes to the implementation of the provisions of the Guiding Principles related to “*Rural areas*” and to “*Broadly-based participation of society in the spatial planning process*” and to promoting the use of the “European Rural Heritage Observation Guide – CEMAT” (*Document 13 CEMAT (2003) 4*).

It considers that the rural heritage is a real asset and resource for territories, a factor and a driving force in sustainable development of the European continent, and plays a decisive role in making rural areas more attractive and in the balance between town and country.

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adopted at the 15th Session of the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT), Moscow, Russian Federation, 9 July 2010

The Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning of the member States of the Council of Europe,

Considering that Recommendation Rec. (2002) 1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on the CEMAT “Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent”, the Ljubljana Declaration on “The territorial dimension of sustainable development” (Council of Europe, 13th CEMAT, 2003) and the Lisbon Declaration on “Networks for sustainable spatial development of the European continent: Bridges over Europe” (Council of Europe, 14th CEMAT, 2006), stress the importance of the enhancement of territories’ endogenous resources;

Considering that these texts emphasise the value of the natural and cultural rural heritage, its protection, its role in the development of the European continent and the participation and mobilisation of communities within the framework of the governance principles;

Considering that implementation of these principles calls for enhancement of rural areas by a consistent spatial development policy and that, with this in view, the rural heritage represents a crucial asset which should be preserved and enhanced;

Pointing out that the Council of Europe has already adopted several conventions, charters and recommendations, general or specialised, dealing with the rural heritage, in particular:

- the European Charter of Architectural Heritage (1975), which deals with traditional villages, the role of heritage in memory and the integrated conservation approach;
- the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, opened for signature in London on 6 May 1969, and revised in Valletta, on 16 January 1992;
- the Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats, opened for signature in Bern, on 19 September 1979;
- the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, opened for signature in Grenada, on 3 October 1985;
- Recommendation No. R(94)6 for a sustainable development and use of the countryside;
- the European Landscape Convention, opened for signature in Florence, on 20 October 2000;
- the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, opened for signature in Faro, on 27 October 2005;

Considering the interest generated in several countries by the “European Rural Heritage Observation Guide – CEMAT”, of which the Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning took note at the 13th CEMAT Session (13 CEMAT (2003) 4);

Considering that this Charter, which appears as an addendum to the present Resolution, seeks to establish an operational link between the provisions of these documents and to make rural heritage a real asset to its territory, a factor and a driving force in sustainable spatial development, and to play a decisive part in making rural areas more attractive and in the town-country balance;

1. *Adopt* this Charter;
2. *Undertake* to implement it, within the limits of their resources and responsibilities;
3. *Recommend* that the governments of member States, at their various levels and in their various sectors of political action, consider the guidelines formulated below.

APPENDIX

CEMAT PAN-EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR THE RURAL HERITAGE: PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

“THE RURAL HERITAGE AS A FACTOR OF TERRITORIAL COHESION”

The rural heritage is a real asset and resource for territories, a factor and a driving force in sustainable development of the European continent, playing a decisive part in making rural areas more attractive and in the town-country balance.

Rural areas, even the most disadvantaged, have tangible and intangible elements, assets and skills, traditions and practices of recognised societal, cultural, architectural and natural value, a testament to the past and to the present. This heritage contributes to the quality of life of the inhabitants, to the quality of the landscapes and to the attractiveness of areas both to those who live there and to those who visit them.

The countryside and its heritage are particularly vulnerable, although they offer the potential for a new type of development and rural life. The decline of rural areas could cause irreversible damage to the living conditions and the identity of their populations and thus to many aspects of heritage;

Vigilance is essential when faced with the various threats hanging over this rural heritage:

- *the built and architectural heritage*, threatened by changes in housing and lifestyle, the acute challenges thrown up by energy issues, the obsolete nature of former farm buildings, which are nevertheless a typical feature of vernacular architecture;
- *the natural heritage and the rural landscape*, threatened by land use practices, farming and forestry methods and production techniques, the building of housing estates on the edges of towns and villages, the creation of new infrastructure, climate change and damage to the environment, particularly to biodiversity;
- *the intangible cultural heritage*, threatened by a somewhat backward-looking view that places tradition against progress and regards as obsolete the customs and skills of a rural community doomed in decline.

It is for stakeholders and policy-makers to take full account of the guidelines set out below.

1. Knowledge and recognition of the heritage

The European continent has a rich rural heritage, shaped over the years by human activity and made up of an exceptional variety of soil types, reliefs, climates and crops.

This heritage covers areas as varied as history, architecture, archaeology, the arts, culture, in particular oral culture, techniques, skills, including food-processing skills, the environment, and natural and built landscapes.

Heritage value not being self-evident, its recognition must come through a process of growing awareness inherent in the concept of “heritage-formation”.

To place an item, object or skill (or a group of objects and skills) in a context of period, duration and space, and to pass it on to future generations, it is important to turn it into “common property” by giving it “meaning”.

In implementing policies for territories, policy-makers have a role to play in promoting the heritage process through:

- working to make citizens, in particular the young, aware of the value of the rural heritage, and to involve them in the issues related to it;
- encouraging heritage preservation through mechanisms based on negotiations with the keepers and potential users of heritage elements;
- encouraging heritage education initiatives that build on the activities of the stakeholders and organisations concerned, and that are incorporated in school or extra-curricular activities, through the teaching of certain subjects (the arts, history, literature, environmental science, etc) or in the form of awareness-raising activities (heritage classes, “exploration” classes, educational outings, etc.);
- encouraging and assisting the creation of places for the organisation of meetings, events, heritage days and forums for discussion on the heritage;
- facilitating or organising heritage recording, in particular at community level, as well as heritage research, using a combination of documentary sources and local knowledge;
- developing research and studies directed towards updated knowledge of the rural heritage and its adaptation to contemporary realities;
- providing all rural heritage stakeholders with national and/or regional guides compiled on the basis of the Council of Europe’s “CEMAT European Rural Heritage Observation Guide”, and ensuring their distribution at local, regional, national and European levels.

2. Heritage use

The enduring nature of the heritage, which is an integral part of the heritage concept, requires us to think about how it is used.

Unless treated like a museum display, heritage items are destined to evolve. Depending on one’s viewpoint, this may involve various types of action: restoration, renovation, rehabilitation, reassignment, etc.

Since the aim is to pass the heritage on to future generations, whilst respecting its function, developing projects for it is the most appropriate way of ensuring a living future for it.

Policy-makers and users will do their best to observe the different phases in the development of a project (preliminary draft, formalisation, familiarisation, follow-up, etc.), in association with each group of potential partners, so as to reinforce and enhance it.

3. The heritage as a driving force for sustainable development

To the extent that the purpose conferred through a particular project meets the expectations of the community or of user groups, a heritage item has the potential to give impetus to cultural and economic development.

Use for economic purposes requires policy-makers and operators to take a two-pronged approach:

- striking a balance between small-scale production methods, traditional skills and innovation, making it possible to adapt to the modern world while offering alternatives to mass production,

- putting customs to practical use in tourist, craft, local or cultural products.

Legislation has provided a framework for some of these approaches, in particular in the food-processing industry, with the introduction of quality labels, but the range of opportunities is wide and should be extended to meet the high demand for authenticity and quality.

It is for policy-makers to:

- promote a type of emerging economy based on heritage, by supporting professionals and practitioners in the development of products, in particular by combining different ways of adding value. Rambling as a means of exploring an area and finding out about its skills and local produce, experiences based on the scents and flavours of the countryside, cultural routes (roads and trails, etc) on mutually complementary themes, and places devoted to particular skills are possible ways of doing so;
- use or re-use traditional methods of natural heritage conservation and management by adapting them to meet present-day requirements. Techniques for the preservation, grafting and utilisation of the genetic resources of old species and breeds are possible areas of application.

All these activities create jobs, directly or indirectly.

4. Heritage at the heart of territorial dynamics

Heritage enhancement can transform the image of the rural areas concerned.

As part of the process of making these areas more attractive and redefining them on the basis of a “living heritage”, it is vital to enlist the support and involvement of the stakeholders and communities concerned.

It is advisable to:

- provide information about the projects as well as to organise public participation;
- place economic initiatives in a wider development context;
- focus on the heritage’s cultural, social and societal dimension.

Culturally speaking, heritage enhancement represents an advantage for territories, communities and individuals. It helps to preserve cultural diversity and results in more rewarding exchanges.

Socially, heritage binds individuals together and builds a bridge between generations. In particular, it provides an opportunity to call on older members of the community, who possess knowledge and tend to be more available.

Creating a project strengthens dialogue and cohesion. In terms of the relationship with society, it contributes to people’s sense of belonging and identity. It is a vehicle for, and a means of, celebrating community life.

It has been observed that heritage can play a major part in the successful settlement of newcomers in the countryside. It is important to ensure, however, that the heritage connection does not develop into a nostalgic attachment to rural life, or a form of introverted assertion of identity.

The process of heritage enhancement requires:

- a comprehensive approach within the territory concerned, translated into a project embracing the various facets of local development, in particular the availability of services for the community;
- an internal and external communication policy on heritage features and the activities conducted;

- a strategy for exchanging information with other areas facing similar heritage issues or, better still, for sharing experience and creating networks;
- inclusion in European, national, regional and local development programmes that provide both a methodological framework for project management and financial resources.

5. The heritage and its trades and professions

Heritage preservation and enhancement are often carried out by associations, using the services of volunteers. Such persons play a key role, but if the projects and related development processes are to succeed, trained persons must be involved as well.

In order to strike a balance between amateurs and professionals, and between activism and qualified intervention, training needs to be at the forefront of policy-makers' concerns.

The first step is to:

- list the areas of competence and the disciplines concerned, as well as the professional skills to be adapted and passed on;
- examine heritage-related local development activities;
- compile reference job descriptions;
- develop a common vocabulary;
- target the different groups of stakeholders (policy-makers, operators, heads of associations, administrative bodies, development agents, specialists, mediators, etc).

These observations and assessments can then serve as a basis for developing heritage training and education eg:

- training in the form of trade apprenticeships, combining general training and practical experience with an engineering/design element including innovation;
- multi-faceted, heritage-related training for professionals in leadership, management, mediation, promotion and marketing;
- training for trainers, in particular those working in the voluntary sector.

Delivering this training and education involves:

- enlisting the support of training institutions, including, of course, vocational training institutions, but also those offering more specific forms of instruction such as mentoring, work-shadowing, etc.
- finding diversified funding, including through sponsorship.

The process of observing activities and increasing the professionalism of those involved, which requires the support of elected representatives, should:

- ensure better qualifications and social recognition;
- facilitate occupational and social integration, especially in the case of young people and women who tend to be more involved in support and co-ordination activities;
- combat the lack of job security that can often be observed in the heritage sector, by enabling professionals to acquire a range of skills.

Such an approach helps to forge a strong social bond between local residents, as well as between different sections of society and between generations. It will only be fully effective, however, if communities are educated about the heritage in a participatory manner.

Rural communities are the driving force in the development of the areas in which they live, and purveyors of changing societal values representing cultural diversity.

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