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BUREAU OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE
FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE
(CDCPP)

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN
MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT (EUR-OPA)

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DRAFT RECOMMENDATION ON
CULTURAL HERITAGE FACING CLIMATE CHANGE:
INCREASING RESILIENCE AND PROMOTING ADAPTATION

Secretariat Memorandum
prepared by the
Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation
Culture, Nature and Heritage Department

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Summary

The draft recommendation: draws upon considerations of the report “Vulnerability of Cultural Heritage to Climate Change” prepared by Prof. Roger Alexandre Lefèvre and Prof. Cristina Sabbioni and on the conclusion of two workshops held by the Council of Europe (EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement and Division of Culture and Cultural Heritage in 2009 and 2017.

Climate change is a growing threat to cultural heritage in Europe and elsewhere. Floods, strong storms, heat waves, extreme rain, drought and landslides are likely to increase in the future depending on latitude. This will affect monuments, archaeological sites, historical cities, museums, collections and libraries alike. The foreseen rise in sea level causing coastal erosion and invasion of continental zones by salty marine waters are certain to affect the rich coastal heritage. Higher mean temperatures will increase bio-deterioration and cause defrosting of permafrost, affecting fragile arctic cultural heritage, often made of wood. Other assets are at risk.

Climate policies have changed, after the publication in 2014 of the 5th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2013-2014), which for the first time mentioned the need to take care of cultural heritage in climate adaptation policies and after the guidance and commitments of the Climate COP 21 of Paris (2015).

The draft recommendation aims to include cultural heritage in climate adaptation strategies and policies thus facilitating the implementation by member States of several Council of Europe conventions in the field of protection and enhancement of cultural heritage.

The Bureau is invited to:

- examine the draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States Parties concerning the need to take action to preserve cultural heritage threatened by climate change.

Draft recommendation CM/REC (2017)... of the Committee of Ministers to Member States Parties on cultural heritage facing climate change: increasing resilience and promoting adaptation.

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on ...at the ...meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No.1);

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members, for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage;

Recalling the decisions of the 57th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, concerning the vulnerability of cultural heritage to climate change (appendix 1 to this recommendation);

Conscious that climate change is a growing threat to cultural heritage in Europe as it may affect some architectural, archaeological and landscape heritage protected by Council of Europe convention as well as other valuable heritage;

Noting that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report (AR5, 2013/14) recognises that climate change will affect culturally valued buildings through extreme events and chronic damage to materials, affecting also indoor environments where cultural heritage is processed;

Noting that the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change encourages Parties to engage in adaptation planning processes and the implementation of activities including the development or enhancement of relevant plans, policies and/or contributions;

Desirous that member States climate change adaptation strategies pay due attention to the protection of cultural heritage;

Recognising the efforts of many governments to prevent or limit negative effects of climate change on cultural heritage;

Noting that the United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development refers to culture within the framework of sustainable development goals and wishing to continue recognising the value and potential of cultural heritage wisely used as a resource for sustainable development and quality of life of European societies;

Recalling the United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and in particular chapter 30d, which invites member States to protect and support the protection of cultural and collecting institutions and other sites of historical, cultural heritage and religious interest.

Noting with interest the work developed by the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement in the field of cultural heritage and disaster risk reduction and the need that civil protection, in its planning for emergencies, continues to pay attention to the specific needs of cultural heritage facing natural hazards;

Recalling its Recommendation CM/REC(2017)1 to member States on the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century;

Recommends that the governments of member States:

- a. Ensure the inclusion of cultural heritage in their policies and strategies for adaptation to climate change;
- b. Consider assessing the economic value of cultural heritage lost to climate change.

APPENDIX I**Appendix 3 of Recommendation 2009 - 1 of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents, adopted at its 57th meeting in Dubrovnik, Croatia (15-16 October 2009) on Vulnerability of Cultural Heritage to Climate Change**

The Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA),

Noting that extreme weather events are expected to increase in frequency and intensity in the next decades as a result of climate change;

Recognising that climate change is an important threat to cultural heritage, likely to increase in the coming years;

Conscious that the foreseen changes in temperature and rainfall in Europe and the whole Mediterranean Region will affect the conservation of the cultural heritage, and that rising temperatures, increased or decreased humidity and the frequency of floods, forest fires, coastal erosion, landslides, heat waves, droughts, sea level rise and change in groundwater patterns will have consequences on the stability of historical buildings, integrity of archaeological sites and conservation of materials and collections that may result if their further deterioration or ageing;

Conscious that the deterioration and, in some cases, loss, of cultural heritage would have negative consequences for European and Mediterranean societies, in particular because of its value as a source of identity and livelihood;

Noting that the preservation of existing heritage structures and traditional building materials and methods have advantages in terms of carbon footprint over building new structures and producing new materials;

Mindful of the global dimension of this problem and of the responsibilities of European and Mediterranean states at the world scale, as signatories of numerous international treaties, agreements and strategies within the United Nations system and the Council of Europe;

Recognising that landscapes form part of cultural heritage, but conscious that the effect of climate change on landscapes requires a more specific approach, given the relevance of their biological, environmental and agricultural components;

Recommend Member States to:

1. assess the risk to cultural heritage from climate change, including sites, buildings and objects that may be affected both by climate-related events and/or by gradual change in environmental conditions;
2. identify those cultural assets at higher risk and evaluate necessary preventive and adaptation measures;
3. promote the adoption of emergency planning for those sites most vulnerable to events such as floods, landslides, coastal erosion and extreme weather-related events;
4. assess the potential impact of mitigation measures, such as renovation of buildings for improved heating efficiency, on cultural heritage;
5. promote at the national level inter-agency cooperation on climate change and cultural heritage, integrating heritage concerns into disaster risk-reduction policies;
6. encourage international cooperation on vulnerability of cultural heritage to climate change, favouring research, action and synergies among international organisations in this field and promoting exchanges of knowledge and experiences within member states and also with other non-member states;
7. integrate as appropriate cultural heritage into the adaptation policies to be promoted at international climate change negotiations;
8. promote training among heritage professionals aimed to recognise and deal with climate change impacts of cultural heritage;
9. foster the inclusion of the appropriate courses within education institutions on the science and management of cultural heritage in a context of climate change;
10. promote and support research on the effects of climate change on cultural heritage, including adaptation and prediction strategies, in particular on:
 - a. vulnerability of materials to climate change;
 - b. development of tools to monitor and manage change;
 - c. effects of lowering water tables and coastal erosion on archaeological sites and built heritage;
 - d. increase in bio-deterioration risk for cultural assets;
 - e. economic evaluation of heritage loss and degradation as a result of climate change
11. encourage local and regional authorities and people with responsibility on managing cultural heritage to be aware of the risks to sites, buildings and objects from a changing climate.