

CDCPP THEMATIC SESSION, 23 November 2022
Contribution from CROATIA

A decade of recommendations of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in the field of culture, heritage and landscape – legacy and prospects

1. ***How do your national authorities / does your organisation use and apply Council of Europe recommendations in their policy-making / in its activities? Can you mention an example, perhaps of a specific recommendation?***
 - The Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia is attentive in following international initiatives when it comes to defining general frameworks for future action, such as in the case of the Council of Europe recommendations, which are often complementary to the work of further EU-based or international institutions and working groups.
 - **When it comes to cultural heritage protection, since 2020, the majority of expert capacities at the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia have been dedicated to the topic of disaster risk management**, triggered primarily by the earthquakes that hit central Croatia in March and December 2022.
 - Therefore, this contribution will specifically focus on the *Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)7 on promoting the continuous prevention of risks in the day-to-day management of cultural heritage: co-operation with States, specialists and citizens*.
 - Prior to hazardous events and as part of the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2020, **the Ministry of Culture and Media organised the conference “Fostering European Cooperation for Cultural Heritage at Risk” held in Dubrovnik in February 2020**, which ultimately resulted in the Council of the EU document *Council conclusions on risk management in the area of cultural heritage (2020/C 186/01)*.
 - Following the 2020 earthquakes, the topic of disaster risk management for cultural heritage reached critical focus in Croatia, and a number of steps have been taken in an effort to strengthen the general response preparedness, and to shape the post-earthquake recovery in line with the *Building Back Better* principle.
 - **In 2021, the Ministry of Culture and Media founded the *Expert and Advisory Committee for Structural Renovation of the Architectural Heritage in the Earthquake Stricken Areas of the Republic of Croatia***, which gathers international and Croatian experts in the fields of seismic hazards, post-earthquake renovation, architecture, art history and cultural heritage protection.
 - The main purpose of the Committee is to offer strategic assistance and support to the activities conducted by the Ministry, both throughout the decision-making process and the implementation of adequate solutions for the structural reinforcement of public, sacral and residential built heritage within the historical urban core of Zagreb and the cultural-historical areas within the Sisak-Moslavina County.

- In the summer of 2021, the fire that spread in the Historic City of Trogir, inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1997, caused positive further action, as the competent body the Conservational Department in Trogir initiated what proved to be a successful cooperation with the local firefighter units. The conservators and firefighters submitted a joint application to take part in the PREVENT program implemented by the ICCROM.
- Following their work within this program, focused on developing evacuation procedures for institutions holding heritage collections, as well as evacuation routes within the historic core, **the city of Trogir had the honour to host the international symposium on mitigating fire risk – PREVENT Preventing Fires, Saving Lives, Safeguarding Heritage, organised in cooperation with the ICCROM in October 2022.**
- **Finally, in 2020, the Ministry of Culture and Media founded the Sector for Risk Management and Implementation of Cultural Heritage Protection Programs** as part of its Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage. While currently working primarily on post-earthquake recovery, future plans include further strengthening of disaster risk management for cultural heritage.

2. *The 2022 Recommendation on the role of culture, cultural heritage and landscape in helping to address global challenges is the latest adopted recommendation. Do your national authorities / does your organisation have any plans on how to use and apply it in their policy making / in its activities?*

- When it comes to implementing the most recent CoE Recommendation, this contribution will focus on **the activities conducted by the Ministry of Culture and Media in regard to Article I-3 on assisting Ukraine in dealing with threats to its cultural heritage during an armed conflict.**
- The Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian ambassador to Ukraine, Anica Djamić, co-organised an online meeting on 15 March 2022, to establish a means of communication between Croatian museologists, conservators and restorers and their Ukrainian colleagues. More precisely, the meeting was held with the representatives of the Lviv Regional Organization of the Ukrainian Association for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Heritage.
- Based on their experience in the protection of immovable cultural heritage and the evacuation of movable cultural heritage during the aggression on the Republic of Croatia in the early 1990s, the Croatian experts offered practical advice and guidance in line with specific questions raised by the Ukrainian part – such as, procedures of evacuating and storing different movable heritage items, digitizing and documenting inventory data to be safely stored at secret locations, approaching physical protection of archaeological sites, applying safe conduct in collapsed buildings etc.
- On this occasion, the Ukrainian experts identified items they needed most urgently – namely, powder fire extinguishers and aluminum boxes in different sizes. Additionally, the Croatian experts suggested procurement of further protective packaging materials (air-encapsulated sheeting, cardboard panels and boxes, microfiber sheeting, polyester fleece, protective tape, packing paper).
- The donation was successfully delivered to Lviv in Ukraine at the beginning of May as part of a larger humanitarian shipment organised in coordination between the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia.

3. *What difficulties, if any, have your authorities / has your organisation encountered in applying Council of Europe recommendations?*

- **When it comes to applying the Council of Europe recommendations in the field of cultural heritage protection specifically, a particular set of challenges can be identified in the Republic of Croatia** that is underlying and common to the implementation of further international recommendations as well, and it includes:
 - the issues of ownership and the ensuing legal relationships;

- insufficient funding availability;
- securing long-term sustainability that actively involves all local stakeholders.

4. *As unique networks, how could the Council of Europe and the CDCPP, including its participants and observers, assist in making Council of Europe recommendations ever more useful in the culture, heritage and landscape field and beyond?*

- Based on the experience gained through the pilot project funded by the Council of Europe and aimed at applying the Faro Convention through cooperation with local authorities, **while the texts of recommendations offer a valuable basis, more detailed elaboration or their practical application has proved to be highly beneficial.**
- In Croatia, the above-mentioned pilot project was conducted on the island of Cres. It was (1) initiated thanks to Council of Europe funding, but furthermore (2) by establishing a local agency (Island Development Agency OTRA), specific models were developed to secure both additional local funding and (3) more long-term sources of funding in future as well as the ways to motivate local stakeholders for continuous support and active participation.
- Generally speaking, the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia continuously strives to implement the recommendations' texts in policy documents and frameworks for action.
- **For example, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan for the period 2021 to 2026 was one such occasion to integrate internationally confirmed recommendations and conclusions in a national plan for action.** When it comes to cultural heritage protection specifically, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan will include the following reforms:
 - **(NPOO C6.1. R1-13) Energy renovation of buildings with the status of cultural property**
 - **(NPOO C2.2. R3-I1) Deployment of digital infrastructure and public administration services by developing a conservation basis system**

Zagreb, 17 November 2022