

Recommendations

WORKSHOP ON PREVENTIVE PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION AND MAINTENANCE Ghardaïa, Algérie, 23–25 November 2009

The participants at the Euromed Heritage 4 Workshop, organised in Ghardaïa, compared the situation in their respective countries and in relation to orientations recommended by major international organisations specialised in the subject. They concluded that interventions in preventive conservation and maintenance of the built environment are relatively complex and often poorly identified. Whenever there are regulations in place, they are often incomplete. Above all, it is in the effective application of orientations and regulations that the important elements appear to be missing.

For that reason, the participants aimed to define a few **priority recommendations**, which they grouped in two categories: an introduction and general principles; and by theme - methodology, tools, techniques; stakeholders and actors; legal and institutional framework; and international cooperation.

Introduction

*First and foremost, one has to underline the importance of **prevention as a concept as well as a practice**. It is important to refer back to ancient practices (within an up-dated approach); indeed it was those practices that allowed heritage to survive till today. As the saying goes “the best therapy is maintenance”; also so do various international charters (The Charter of Venice, 1964; ICOMOS charter on vernacular built heritage 1999...).*

*It is also appropriate to stress here the **difference between monumental restoration** and reinforcing the idea that specific attention must be paid to the **built and populated environment**, which is a **living heritage**, taking into consideration its **relation with the territory**. In any case, the following recommendations are **broad** and have to be **adapted to the specific situations**. Lastly, and for an efficient implementation of these recommendations, it is essential that all the **stakeholders and institutions involved coordinate**.*

Preventive conservation and maintenance...

- ... are in line with the **global strategy and policy of conservation**
- ... target a «**correct and balanced**» adapted to needs and available means
- ...are in line with a **process for sustainable development**
- ... are an essential part of social policies in favour of the inhabitants, particularly with regards to lodging.
- ... demand the allocation for and financing of maintenance plans.
- ... require the **preparation of inventories and documentation of the executed works**.
- ... should be oriented towards the **adaptation of the traditional built heritage to contemporary needs** as a way to valorise it.
- ...strongly recommends the **reuse of buildings**.
- ... require the **involvement of administrations as well as the participation of the community** in all

the stages of the process.

1. Methodology – Tools – Techniques

- It is always necessary to maintain an **interdisciplinary approach**.
- Take into account the **integrated approach of the cycle «analysis-diagnosis-action-follow up-analysis...»¹**.
- The aim is to achieve the **best balance between the cost of the intervention (minimised and reasonable) and the expected results**.
- The global process of study and follow-up should be based on **inventories, meticulous watching as well as on the identification of typologies** of buildings and structures, which is necessary in order to define parameters of priorities in risk assessment.
- The **documentation of the interventions, periodic follow-up (monitoring) and reporting** must be implemented systematically.
- They involve the **collection, documentation and adaptation of traditional skills for contemporary needs and uses**.
- At the same time, they involve organising the **documentation and adaptation of contemporary know-how to existing buildings**.
- They involve taking into consideration the aspects relative to **energy efficiency and the utilisation of renewable energies, and to adapt measures to fight against pollution and other environmental hazards**.
- Anticipate rapid procedures for urgent situations. This involves the definition of emergency plans that are compatible with likely risks and based on prior diagnosis.
- Establish a system of architectural and technical assistance, particularly through the development and dissemination of operational tools: maintenance and rehabilitation manuals (including a calendar, tasks), illustrative panels of model solutions and prohibited actions, pilot projects, etc.

2. Stakeholders and actors

- **Exact definition of roles:** of the state and the different ministries, the local communities, the associations and users; the architects, experts, contractors, builders, etc.
- Ensure **coordination among all the actors**.
- Provide **professional training to all the actors**, especially at the three levels of the technical services, the architects and managers, and the contractors and labourers.
- Guarantee a professional training in related skills.
- Encourage the establishment of enterprises specialised in traditional crafts and artisanship (workshops, materials) to make available traditional materials and ensure their application.
- Promote the **participation of the larger public** through awareness raising campaigns and other dissemination tools adapted to the situations and to local languages: information and awareness-raising sheets, prizes (examples of good practice, professions, etc.). The idea is to **re-instate the owners' identification with the built areas**.
- **Promote and activate volunteer work**.

3. Legal and institutional framework

- The set of measures proposed in these recommendations must be supported by a coherent **legal**

framework and regulations, at both the central and local levels. More particularly, this framework must demand **obligatorily the drawing-up of a diagnosis and a periodic maintenance plan**.

- For mobilising the necessary funds, local, regional and national authorities must put in place a financial plan and /or a set of various incentive measures on behalf of the users, such as tax reductions, allocations, loans, etc. Similarly, a financial scheme must be allocated for preventive actions for use by service providers, at least in the preliminary phase.
- **Public and private partnerships have to be included in the management and implementation of these recommendations.**
- **In order to improve the built environment the conservation policy has to be in tune with the social housing policy.**
- **The modernisation (optimisation) of traditional forms of collective management** of built heritage must be encouraged.
- Ensure that technical norms specific to the built heritage are implemented, whilst ensuring the compatibility between the preservation of this heritage and its adaptive reuse.
- Promote a certification for specialised actors associated with a specific built area.
- Promote a system of 'labels' for specific materials used in the preservation of built areas.
- Generally, ensure that **regulations are precise in their directives and that they are properly applied.**

4. International cooperation

- **Promote the organisation of training and regional workshops** with view to share experiences and know-how and exchange good-practices. Educational programmes and awareness-raising among the youth should equally be encouraged.
- Stimulate the actors and professionals in the heritage sector to **organise themselves into associations at the national level, and to promote exchanges with similar bodies at the international level.**

ⁱ (voir www.international.icomos.org/charters/structures_e.htm)