

**SEMINAR ON THE VALUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR SOCIETY
THE FARO CONVENTION AND THE HEREIN TOOL**

“A few words about Faro”

by Daniel THEROND

In a few days' time, in the context of the Macedonian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, a high-level conference will be held in Skopje to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Granada Convention on the theme "The social value of cultural heritage in Europe". Then, on 1 and 2 October the forum "Heritage, Participation, Prosperity", taking place in Istanbul, will mark the 25th anniversary of the launch of the European Heritage Days. In one way or another these various events contribute to debate on some very topical questions: In what directions is the concept of heritage evolving today? How can we better apprehend the benefits and potential of heritage in our changing societies

The specific approach of the Council of Europe

The heritage concept has undergone many changes since its emergence, and its expansion in the 19th century. Whatever the context, the concept of heritage represents an

intellectual construct, created by specific population groups in a given place and time and reflects European society as it constantly evolves. A quick review of the Council of Europe's activities over the last thirty years would reveal a logical sequence leading up to the recent Faro Convention.

- the Council's approach is neither academic nor speculative: the aim is to transform scientific achievements into political and administrative strategies ;

- the Council's action does not target only the exceptional heritage (thus steering clear of duplicating the world heritage mechanism) but involves a comprehensive approach to the built heritage encompassing urban and rural architecture and the interstitial elements of the heritage fabric;

- the follow-up action to the various heritage and landscape conventions is increasingly important as part of the search for European-level indicators for sustainable use of territory's cultural resources.

The Council of Europe developed in the 1970s the principles of the integrated conservation of heritage which were enshrined in 1985 in the Granada Convention for the

Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe. "Granada" set out the fundamental elements of all heritage policies: identification and inventory, legal protection, sanctions, integrated conservation strategies, information, awareness-raising and training. The aim of the Valletta Convention of 1992 was to protect the archaeological heritage as a source of collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study. We very much hope that the Federation of Russia which signed in 1992 the Convention will ratify soon this reference text. Broadening the Granada and Valletta Convention concept of "sites", the European Landscape Convention reconfirmed in 2000 the Council's pioneering role on the living environment, laying down unprecedented guidelines for a qualitative approach to environmental management and a holistic vision of the natural and cultural values and assets of territories.

It is sometimes said that the founding fathers of the 1970s were obsessed by buildings and town planning and paid little attention to intangible heritage. This is somewhat misleading as the very rationale of integrated conservation was based on personal well-being. The cross-sectoral approach of the Faro Convention is anyway inspired by the "message" on integrated conservation.

2. The follow up of the COE conventions and its working instruments

The follow-up of these conventions is under the responsibility of the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) and their main practical working instrument is the HEREIN information system (European Heritage Information Network) involving more than 40 countries. From 2011 HEREIN will be strengthened. Besides an easier updating system of the database on heritage policies, HEREIN will offer the possibility of undertaking and managing targeted on-line studies, by sharing case-studies on selected topics relating to current priorities in the field of the different conventions. Updated information will be provided tomorrow about the ongoing work on HEREIN.

In the same time and looking at the CoE working programme co-operation activities implemented in priority regions (SouthEast Europe, South Caucasus and Black Sea) act as a laboratory for observing the contributions of heritage to revitalising territories and to cohesion in human communities.

3. Developments since the 1990s and the “new heritage frontiers”

Certain effects of globalisation have become increasingly clear. A widening gap has emerged between the social, symbolic and collective value of cultural heritage, which is hard to assess or quantify, and its economic dimensions that fall under the laws of the market and the principle of profitability. Another societal change involves trends in migration, including within individual countries. In many countries the emergence of multicultural societies, in particular in the major urban centres, and, indeed, of intercultural or melting-pot societies, calls for other angles of approach to the heritage concept.

Other aspects of globalisation such as the acceleration of the process of digitisation in the knowledge-based society offer extraordinary benefits in terms of access to heritage but also raise a series of challenges in terms of intellectual and real property and have implications which are not fully under control. These are societies at some remove from the traditional juxtaposition between a heritage, “a” territory and “a” culture, and confronted with other forms of culture and with ecological challenges. It will be necessary to work on a combined operation in the face of the current

challenges: confrontation of differing and sometimes contradictory values attaching to the heritage, ways of involving the citizens in responsibilities that can no longer be shouldered solely by the state, forms of public/private/voluntary partnership, evolution of occupational profiles and thus of training, maintenance of a general culture enabling young people to attain understanding of heritage values and appreciate landscape, and progressively devising a methodology for sustainable use of the cultural and landscape resources.

This was the changing background to the work in 2004 and 2005 by the group of experts which drew up the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society.

At the beginning of this colloquy I would like to refer to a number of key issues brought up in the handbook "Heritage and beyond" published at the end of 2009 with a view to better explaining the origins and context of the Faro Convention. In particular, Graham Fairclough observed that heritage means not only the cultural properties that we inherit, irrespective of whether we want to keep them, but can also be taken to mean the processes by which we understand, contextualise, perceive, manage, modify, and transform the inherited world. The new objectives of

heritage as implied in Faro and Florence conventions take us beyond the physical preservation of parts of the past that to a large extent underpin the Granada and the Valletta conventions. Two new objectives are: "first the management of change throughout the whole environment, second, capitalising on the contribution that cultural heritage makes to high level purposes and the big pictures".

The traditional approach to heritage can be summarised as being mainly a process wherein experts identify what were regarded as the best buildings and decision makers then put in mechanism for protection alongside various forms of state funding for conservation. From the 1950s there developed an assumption that heritage was only that which could be afforded and that state fundings was the only way to protect buildings. It seems however in fact that not all heritage needs public subsidy and not all heritage needs designation.

According to Fairclough heritage must also be approached from the angle of place-making"; " What we choose not to pass on to the future is not a black and white issue....between the extremes lie a range of ways of passing on the memory, the intangible remains, the outline of building or the whole of its fabric"...

4. What about the benefits of the Council of Europe Faro Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society ?

This convention takes a different approach from the previous international instruments relating to heritage. It does not challenge the Council of Europe and UNESCO conventions regarding protection and conservation, but supplements them effectively by highlighting the potential which cultural heritage offers for the cohesion of societies and the adoption of a model of development which respects individuals and the environment.

The text does not create enforceable rights for citizens and cannot become the focus of individual legal disputes. Instead, it links the states which have ratified it in joint efforts to find the ways and means of establishing a democratic culture for people's living environment.

May I recall briefly a few key words of Faro

4.1 Article 1 sets the tone; the *"rights relating to cultural heritage"* are recognised as being inherent in individuals' right to participate in cultural life within the meaning of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Of course, the

convention does not grant the rights but offers an opportunity to facilitate the responsible exercise of these rights.

4.2 Article 2 proposes a novel, cross-sectoral definition and refers to the constantly evolving “values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions of people”. It does not overlap with the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage but rather is a matter of being aware of the significance of the tangible and intangible heritage as a whole for society in a specific yet changing context.

In this definition there are no real boundaries to heritage which can begin as recently as yesterday and there is even an appearing concept of future heritage as a way to inject quality and legibility into new developments. The word “resources” must be emphasized as it carries the implication that heritage exists to be utilised and that there are users who will benefit from the use individually or in communities.

4.3 A major innovation: the concept of *heritage communities*. The cultural heritage can be adopted as well as being inherited. Awareness of heritage may be the result not only from “experts sovereign” decisions but also from the aspirations of population groups which are not

necessarily linked by a language, ethnicity or even a common past but are, in any event, bound by a deliberate, shared commitment. The text is to be understood in the light of Article 5, under which the public interest is recognised by specific authorities *in accordance with [the] importance to society* of the elements concerned. This means that not just anyone can demand public support for whatever they like whenever it suits them.

4.4 Section III sets out in much greater detail than other conventions the principles of shared responsibilities and the arrangements for access and participation. This is a major plus of the convention, which does not just mention the decentralisation of decision-making but also refers to the effective participation of individuals and heritage communities in the processes of identification, interpretation and conservation. The relevant provisions should lead to an interesting debate about the respective roles of the public and experts and about changes in the profiles of certain professionals who are required, much more frequently than in the recent past, to act as intermediaries, interpreters and facilitators, without, of course, that involving an overall decline in the essential technical expertise and know-how. This is a long-term undertaking.

4.5 Another innovation lies in the definition for the first time of the *common heritage of Europe* (Article 3), which is said to comprise not only all forms of cultural heritage which together constitute a shared source of remembrance, understanding and creativity but also the intangible heritage of ideals, principles and values which underpin the development in Europe of a peaceful and stable society.

The advantage of this concept can be seen particularly clearly in regions of Europe affected by political changes and movements of borders. Considering all layers of heritage characteristic of a given area as an attractive cultural asset and a development resource for all population groups now living together in the area concerned and for any visitors is an alternative to the possible exploitation of heritage to keep past conflicts alive.

Beyond the above-mentioned recognition of the public interest of certain elements of the heritage, the parties undertake to *recognise the value of cultural heritage situated on territories under their jurisdiction, regardless of its origin.*

To sustain cultural heritage the Faro Convention sets out, through a series of articles, a range of measures such as

sustainable management and regular maintenance, the formulation of technical standards suited to heritage, the study and upgrading of traditional materials – bearing in mind now the climate change - and reviews of the skills, qualifications and accreditation of professionals.

Sustainability was at the heart of the ideas that have led to this framework-convention.

To avoid any confusion, the authors of the Faro Convention did not venture into the area of cultural industries as covered by the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. However once the Faro Convention enters into force, interesting exchanges will however have to take place regarding the use of the potential offered by heritage in the creative process in a manner that does not undermine the preservation of resources.

4.7 Lastly, Section IV of the Convention pays greater attention than other instruments to its follow up mechanism. It calls for the development of a shared and structured system for disseminating information and exchanging good practices (benchmarking). This monitoring function has already been foreshadowed by the Council of Europe with the strengthening from 2009 of the HEREIN system for

monitoring the Granada and Valletta Conventions. The aim is to work together to determine common criteria and indicators for the sustainable use of the resources.

Obviously, the aim of integrated conservation is not just to establish cultural and tourist industries seeking short-term profits or to turn Europe into a huge amusement park for visitors from all over the world, particularly Asia's emerging middle classes. The main purpose of heritage is – or at least should be – to serve local inhabitants and to contribute to endogenous development, of which the cultural and tourist industries are only one part. The heritage dimension still needs to be viewed through this much broader prism of agricultural policies, trade, housing, environmental conservation and development, and many other fields of activity.

In the final analysis, heritage and landscape conventions are inseparable from complex considerations about societal issues. This influences the activities of the CDPATEP. In the 2011-2013 timeframe, we cannot ignore the facts of an economic crisis which might result in certain choices regarding development and social organisation being called into question. In the next few years, the emergence of new

risks – among them climate change – will also inject greater urgency into the debate on the sustainable use of resources.

Furthermore, the future Council of Europe cooperation programme should highlight the specific role of this Organisation in post-conflict areas through initiatives contributing to the social and economic revitalisation of living communities. The action plans in South East Europe and South Caucasus constitute good examples of such a process.

The 15th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for regional/spatial planning took place in Russia in July. A balanced territorial development aims to allow each region to make the most of its territorial capital. Based on the holistic and dynamic approach which can be found in the texts of the Florence and then Faro Conventions, this involves proposing a culture of development to aid and support countries in devising and adapting cross-disciplinary and inter-sectoral policies taking advantage of the cultural and landscape added value of the territory.

To conclude, the heritage remains an approach to balance between unity and diversity, between collective well-being and respect for differences, for an art of being together and

still being ourselves. Considering its outstanding cultural heritage Russia has an important role to play in the overall international reflection to draw up a new roadmap for our common heritage of Europe. The access of Russia to the Valletta and Faro Conventions and a stronger involvement in the follow-up of these basic texts together with a full participation in the HEREIN information system will be particularly welcome and precious.