

Vienna October 18th 2013

Report

Group meeting of Presidents and Representatives of the ICOMOS National Committees of the South-East European Region following the Dubrovnik-Valetta principles

Vienna, 10th – 13th October 2013

“Strategies for the Maintenance and Support of the Common Architectural Heritage in the Cultural Area of the former Habsburg Monarchy“ was this years' motto of the meeting in Vienna, taking place after the first regional meeting from October 6th to 8th 2011 in Ljubljana, Slovenia with 9 National ICOMOS Committees represented. The scope of the invitation for 2013 was extended by 8 additional National Committees from South Eastern Europe. Furthermore the transnational organizational committee (Austria, Croatia, and Romania) invited young professionals from the region who have dealt with relevant topics in their theses. Thus 35 participants from 13 nations in the relevant region attended the conference that took place at Otto Wagner's Psychiatric Hospital at Steinhof and the Vienna University of Technology.

The first day of the conference focused on ICOMOS serving as a platform for future cross-border cultural heritage research. The upcoming Culture Programs of EU, especially HORIZON2020 meet the scope of ICOMOS. 3 specific objectives of IP6C seem to be compatible in calling for:

- policies' and practical action for the protection and promotion of cultural resources
- building capacities for innovative management strategies for the protection, preservation and sustainable use of cultural resources
- transnational linkage of cultural heritage sites focusing their sustainable use and promotion.

Within the programs 2007-2013 the project “arch4579” between the city of Vienna (Austria) and the City of Brno (Czech Republic) already showed the potential of such regional research cooperation within the field of cultural heritage. The legacy of the Habsburg Empire provides an enormous range of further activities within this field. During the meeting first ideas were developed and existing national projects with cross-border potential presented.

The Habsburg heritage was chosen as a common denominator in the region. It manifests itself not only in the visible built heritage, but also even more strongly in the theory of the Viennese art historians Alois Riegl and Max Dvorak as well as in the practices of the “k.k. Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale founded 1850” that monitored common heritage. Therefore their role as contemporaries of Georg Dehio, as well as, creators of the theoretical foundation for protection and care of monuments within the region was presented in the morning sessions of the second conference day. The participants agreed that the growing together politically at the end of the 20th



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century necessitates a re-evaluation of this specific common heritage. Therefore the regional ICOMOS network will be able to contribute to an outstanding extent.

A third complex of topics was devoted to the compatibility of the built heritage with contemporary architecture. Presentations of the Croatian, Austrian and Hungarian NC's showed several positive examples according to the Vienna Memorandum of 2005. Orientations of these kinds should increasingly be a fundamental part of the academic education of architects. Nevertheless, as rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic building structures are the most growing segments of building activities not only in Europe, great effort must be placed on education in this area, as in education of young academics, in retraining of practising architects and with respect to consulting activities both for public and private clients. ICOMOS International intends to focus on this particular aspect in the future.

Obligatory reports from all NCs of the South-Eastern European region clearly expressed that the financial crisis of 2008 has had a serious impact on the financial background of the committees. All the national states of the region have cut back their support for federal, as well as, nongovernmental efforts in the field of protection and care of cultural heritage. Awareness that public support is essential and can be fulfilled by a nongovernmental experts' organisation like ICOMOS could be raised through coordinated transnational actions to escape national politics and policies.

In order to guarantee that non-governmental institutions such as ICOMOS can fulfil their important tasks, necessary public financial support is needed, also in the future.

The meeting resulted in three final statements. The first one recommends serious research and analysis before taking any further action within the area of Otto Wagner's psychiatric hospital at Steinhof, which at the moment is strongly at risk of losing its integrity. The second statement reminds one of the common heritage of the region with respect to the theory of monument protection around 1900 and encourages adapting this tradition for future developments. Finally the participants of the meeting expressed their wish to install a national ICOMOS committee in Kosovo, if the official status of the country within the world does allow this. This should be proofed by the Executive Committee of ICOMOS in Paris. If not, the national experts of Kosovo on cultural heritage will always stay incorporated in regional ICOMOS network.



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Statement

Vienna October 12th 2013

Conservation Philosophy

The representatives of thirteen ICOMOS National Committees of the South-East European Region gathering on the occasion of the group meeting in Vienna 10th -13th October 2013 reconsidered in a number of contributions the roots and pillars of the development of the modern philosophy of preservation and conservation. These fundamental ideas are connected with the work and the names of Adalbert Stifter, Moritz Thausing, Camillo Boito, Alois Riegl, Max Dvořák, Cornelius Gurlitt, Gjuro Szabo, Ljubo Karaman, France Stelè, Vojislav Molè and Andjela Horvat. Istvan Möller.

In the territories of the former Habsburg Monarchy the new principles of conservation theory and practice have their institutional basis in the k. k. Central-Commission founded in 1850.

From a contemporary point of view it is to be stated that many of the ideas of this great period before and after 1900 are not only absolutely valid, but they present in a certain sense stimulating and prophetic messages for our current approach to architectural and cultural heritage.

These important roots of conservation philosophy spread all over the world and influenced a number of charters and basic papers focusing on the authenticity and integrity of monuments, sites and places. Therefore it is vital to remind one of this fundamental background, especially in the light of some contemporary trends.

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Ferch, Christoph, *ICOMOS Austria*
Gutsulyak, Roman, *ICOMOS Ukraine*
Halev, Ivan, *ICOMOS Bulgaria*
Herbig, Ulrike, *ICOMOS Austria*
Jäger-Klein, Caroline, *ICOMOS Austria*
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Lehne, Andreas, *ICOMOS Austria*
Lipp, Wilfried, *ICOMOS Austria*
Maier-Orieschnig, Elfi, *ICOMOS Austria*
Malinovic, Miroslav, *ICOMOS Bosnia*
Neuwirth, Franz, *ICOMOS Austria*

Nistor, Sergiu, *ICOMOS Romania*
Paulowitz, Bernd, *ICOMOS Austria*
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Scarrocchia, Sandro, *Italy*
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Simovic, Snjezana, *ICOMOS Montenegro*
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Weber-Andreskov, Mirela, *ICOMOS Romania*

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Otto Wagner's Psychiatric Hospital at Steinhof in Vienna:

The representatives of thirteen ICOMOS National Committees from the South-East European Region assembled on the occasion of the group meeting in Vienna 10th to 13th October 2013 emphasizing the outstanding importance of Otto Wagner's Psychiatric Hospital at Steinhof, which was opened in 1907.

Therefore the participating delegates support all the efforts to preserve the site as an authentic ensemble.

Considering the high values of the site with its architectural, social and medical dimensions, greatest attention is to be given to the challenging questions of closing down the hospital scheduled for 2020 and the problems of future use.

The delegates are convinced that the Steinhof Ensemble has indeed outstanding qualities and suggest serious research as a basis for any further decision-making process.

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ICOMOS National Committee Kosovo

The representatives of thirteen ICOMOS National Committees of the South-East European Region gathering on the occasion of the group meeting in Vienna 10th -13th October 2013 have been informed that currently there are strong efforts to found an ICOMOS National Committee in Kosovo. The official foundation depends on the clarification of the political status of the Republic of Kosovo.

The participants of the Vienna Conference welcome the efforts of the provisional ICOMOS Kosovo group and ask the ExCom to consider this situation in the best interest of the cultural heritage of the region.

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