

**CONGRES DES POUVOIRS LOCAUX ET REGIONAUX DE L'EUROPE**  
**CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE**



**SEVENTH SESSION**

**(Strasbourg, 23-25 May 2000)**

**Resolution 98 (2000)<sup>1</sup>**  
**on historic towns in Europe**

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1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 24 May 2000 and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 25 May 2000 (see doc. CPL (7) 5, draft resolution presented by Mr C. Chirita, rapporteur).

The Congress,

bearing in mind the proposal of the Chamber of Local Authorities,

1. Affirms that historic towns and cities throughout Europe are the context within which much of the world's most significant cultural heritage is experienced and enjoyed; that they tell the story of Europe's social, economic and physical evolution; and are home to some of the finest examples of architectural expression through the ages;
2. Considers that historic towns are invariably at the heart of the cultural life of their region, attracting millions of visitors and making a significant national and European economic contribution;
3. Notes that, whilst historic towns are currently facing unprecedented challenges at the beginning of the third millennium, they have, however, a unique record of adapting to change and offer a model for all towns striving to secure a sustainable future;
4. Adds that, whilst most towns in Europe have managed to retain their historic core, there are others where local authorities do not always have sufficient resources or expertise to safeguard their heritage;
5. Considers that one of the main challenges affecting such communities is the achievement of a balance between historic preservation and economic development;
6. Believes however that the protection of the legacy of the past is an investment for the future and that it should be recognised that conservation policies can promote economic growth, help reduce unemployment and promote social cohesion, through the reflection of community pride and continuity;
7. Considers that it is important that local authorities are able to benefit financially from increased resources brought about by tourism;
8. Recalls the series of European symposia, organised by the earlier Standing Conference which highlighted, at the time, the main questions affecting local authorities in Europe in dealing with their historic heritage (see Appendix 1);
9. Believing that there is a case for reviving such symposia, particularly given the geographical expansion of the Council of Europe and that much of the expertise arising from such symposia would be of value to new member countries;
10. Welcoming the current Council of Europe campaign on "Europe: a common heritage", in which local authorities play a significant role, both as members of the national committees organising the campaign and as a vehicle for some of the pilot projects designated to illustrate the themes of the campaign;
11. Welcomes, in this context, the establishment of a European Association of Historic Towns and Regions by the CLRAE, both as a contribution to the campaign and as a valid mechanism in its own right for furthering the cause of historic towns in Europe;
12. Wishes to recall, in this respect, the aims, principles and objectives of the association, which appear as Appendix 2 to this resolution;

13. Asks local authorities in Europe to adopt a sustainable approach to the future management of historic towns and in particular to:

### **Environment and urban planning**

14. Integrate conservation policy into all other sectoral policies affecting the urban environment, for example, for infrastructure, transport management, environmental protection, accepting that conservation policies can only be effective if they form part of comprehensive urban management;

15. Recognise the economic, social and cultural importance of their historic heritage and archaeology and, accordingly, allocate sufficient resources to their protection and enhancement;

16. Ensure that legislation on the protection of monuments and sites should apply, without exception, to all public institutions and to major economic and commercial enterprises and interests;

17. Accept the need for an integrated approach to land use and transportation planning, recognising the crucial role of good quality public transport in ensuring both accessibility and improvement to what otherwise would have been a dull or monotonous environment;

18. Accept the survival of the historic heritage depends upon it being given worthwhile contemporary use that can restore and maintain the fabric as well as add vitality to the experience of the historic centre, for example, retailing;

19. Give preference to the re-use of the existing built environment including rehabilitation of "brown field" sites and existing properties rather than the construction of new housing estates, particularly on the outskirts of towns and give priority to the creation of attractive urban environments without leading to intrusion into the countryside;

20. Support the need to promote high quality modern architecture and urban design that reflects the contribution of the twenty-first century to the quality of historic towns.

### **Economic**

21. Create a mix of functions in historic communities, with the provision particularly of retailing, housing, small-scale commercial uses and street activities, events and festivals in order to maintain and secure the vitality and viability of historic centres;

22. Recognise the importance of developing complementary economic strategies that reflect the importance of the cultural heritage as a positive contribution to both economic well being and quality of life;

23. Promote tourism as an important economic activity which can bring much needed investment but which needs to be managed to ensure that economic benefits are not secured at the cost of environmental deterioration;

24. Explore the importance of the emerging "knowledge" economy as an important provider of sustainable economic activity in areas of high quality of life, such as historic towns.

## **Social**

25. Bear in mind that economic development and policies for the protection of the historic heritage should be accompanied by complementary social measures – planning for living communities including social housing and the development of policies relating to the safety and security of town centres;
26. Ensure the participation of the population in all decisions having a major impact on the cultural and historic heritage, recognising that community involvement in democratic decisions affecting historic towns is a major factor in securing sustainability and social inclusion;
27. Recognise the importance of maintaining and enhancing local identity as a key factor in developing social cohesiveness and civic pride.

## **Finance, resources and partnership**

28. In relation to finance, accept that financial resources are required not just for rehabilitation of the heritage, but also for its maintenance and management; equally, resources are required for the improvement of whole areas around buildings and not just the buildings themselves;
29. Develop enlightened, clear and firm urban planning and management by the local authority to create a favourable context for conservation in order to use to maximum advantage available financial resources and attract additional resources from the private sector;
30. Seek to use the following fiscal and financial mechanisms:
  - taxation on owners who wilfully let their historic properties deteriorate;
  - architectural assistance bureaux, provided by local authorities for owners and shopkeepers wishing to restore their properties;
  - revolving funds, low interest loans, fiscal incentives for owners and tenants to rehabilitate property, partnership schemes between national and municipal administrations and residents;
  - possibilities of purchase of historic buildings at low cost, provided they are subsequently improved;
  - low VAT ratings and favourable fiscal conditions in relation to succession.
31. Develop mechanisms for co-operation between public and private sectors, through discussions in advance of development and joint ventures aimed at attracting private sector funding;
32. Agree to participate in partnership projects with other historic towns to secure funding and to facilitate skill exchanges to share expertise and good practice.

## **Promotion and publicity**

33. Believe that improved information, publicity and policies for public relations have a fundamental role to play in successful restoration schemes;
34. Accept that information and publicity should be, from the beginning, an integral part of conservation and urban regeneration programmes, with its own budget and a personnel responsible for providing information to and from residents, building contractors, investors, etc., about such programmes;
35. Accept equally that the marketing and promotion of exemplary projects, the improvement of the image of a region or town as a stimulus to investment and the belief in architectural preservation as a selling point should be integral elements in all major improvement programmes;
36. Recognise that mechanisms for improving the flow of information can include the use of exhibitions, audio-visual material and the Internet; small-scale workshops with residents, high profile media events; high quality publications; emblems and logos; and, particularly, the encouragement of the involvement of children in well-publicised restoration schemes.
37. Encourage the establishment where they do not yet exist of national associations of historic towns in respective countries;
38. Encourage the membership of the European Association of Historic Towns and Regions by national associations of historic towns, where they exist;
39. Ask local authorities to play their full part in the current campaign of the Council of Europe, "Europe: a Common heritage" and in its follow-up;
40. **Asks the CLRAE to:-**
41. support the work and objectives of the European Association of Historic Towns and, to this end, asks the relevant specialised committee to examine the most appropriate way of so doing;
42. consider the organisation of a future symposium on historic towns on a theme, date and place to be proposed by the relevant specialised CLRAE commission, in consultation with the Bureau of the Association of Historic Towns and Regions;
43. play its full part in any follow-up to the current campaign of the Council of Europe "Europe: a common heritage";
44. encourage the strengthening of existing partnerships between historic towns and the establishment of new partnerships.
45. encourage the exchange of information between historic towns through the establishment of respective web sites.

**Appendix 1**

**Series of European symposia on historic towns  
1971 - 92**

European Symposium on Towns of Historic Interest, Split (Yugoslavia), 20-23 October 1971

Second European Symposium of Historic Towns, Strasbourg (France), 30 September-2 October 1976

Third European Symposium of Historic Towns, Munich/Landshut, Bavaria (Germany), 29 November-1 December 1976

Fourth European Symposium of Historic Towns, Fribourg (Switzerland), 14-16 October 1981

Fifth European Symposium of Historic Towns, Seville (Spain), 8-10 May 1985

Sixth European Symposium of Historic Towns, Cambridge (United Kingdom), 20-22 September 1989

Seventh European Symposium of Historic Towns, Istanbul (Turkey), 16-18 September 1992

## **Appendix 2**

### **Aim, principles and objectives of the European Association of Historic Towns and Regions**

#### **Aim**

To promote the interests of Europe's historic towns and regions.

#### **Principles**

The association will aspire to uphold the key principles of democratic accountability and member solidarity in pursuing its aims and objectives and in carrying out its activities.

#### **Objectives**

Establish international co-operation in the fields of urban conservation and cultural heritage through:

- the creation and development of a European network of historic towns associations;
- assistance with the establishment of national associations of historic towns in countries where they do not yet exist;
- collaboration with other relevant European institutions and organisations to ensure effective co-ordination and involvement;
- regional co-operation between historic towns.

Participate in campaigns relating to Europe's cultural heritage, such as those organised by the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Share experience and good practice on all aspects of urban conservation and management of Europe's cultural heritage.

Promote the vitality and viability and sustainability of historic towns in the belief that conservation of cultural heritage promotes economic and social development.

Seek to ensure that European policy-making bodies recognise and reflect the specific needs and interests of historic towns and their inhabitants.

Promote appropriate national legislation to protect and enhance the historic heritage of European historic cities.

Raise public awareness about the importance and value of Europe's cultural heritage.

Encourage and support European partnerships between historic towns including assistance with bidding for finance and projects.

Promote and facilitate education and training in the fields of urban management and cultural heritage.