

WORLD

The League of Historical Cities Bulletin

HISTORICAL CITIES

NO. 10: MAR. 1997



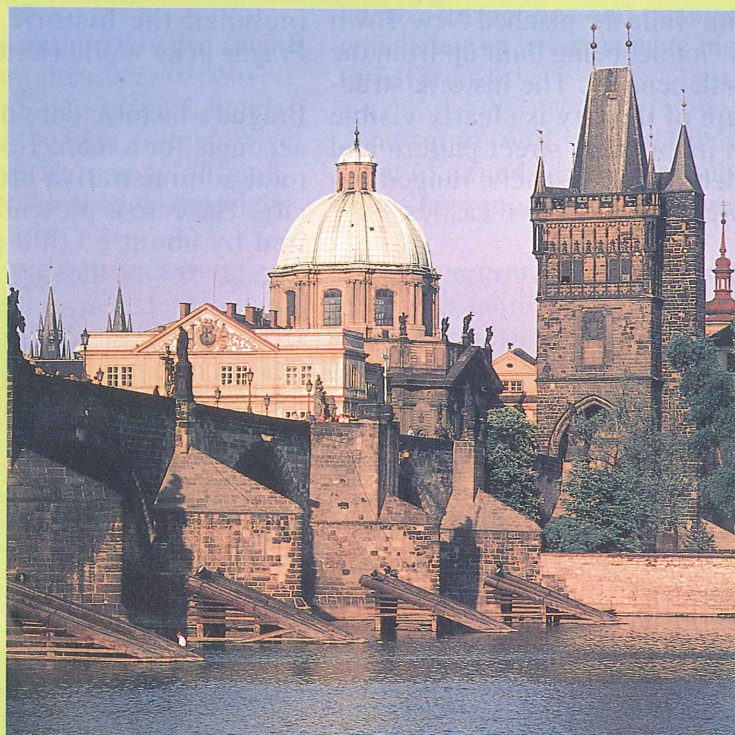
Bridges in the center of Prague

Prague

5th World Conference in Xian

New member cities

Interview



Charles Bridge and Bridge Tower

The historic core of PRAGUE



Classical Panorama of Prague

1. Introduction

Prague's historic center, situated in the valley of the River Vltava, is the heart of this city. The oldest parts of the core—the Old Town, the Lesser Town and the Castle district—are of Romanesque origin, while the planned New Town is Gothic, being built up from the 14th century. The historic structure of the city is clearly visible in its primary street pattern and identifiable districts, ranged between the city's two castles.

In 1976 the government of the Republic proclaimed the entire city centre as an historic area protected by law. Protection was afforded to the network of streets, building heights and local character. The city authorities have created specialized organizations empowered with rights and means to implement these legal principles.

As many as thirteen National Cultural Monuments are located within the protected area, including Prague Castle, Vysehrad Castle and the Charles Bridge.

More than 1,400 other protected historic buildings and landmarks are found there. Of the more than 10,000 protected works of art and artifacts, most are located in the historic core. UNESCO in its regular session in December 1992 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA, included the historic core of Prague in its World Heritage List.

Prague's historic core of 800 ha accounts for a mere 1.6% of the total administrative area of the city. The core is presently inhabited by about 65,000 people—roughly 6% of the city's overall population. However the core offers over 200,000 job opportunities, representing one third of all jobs in Prague.

Compared to other great European cities, Prague is unique in its peaceful urban development over the past four and a half centuries. The last significant devastation was by fire in 1541. The first World War spared Prague entirely. While several buildings, some of historic importance, were destroyed in World War Two, the overall level of destruction was

very slight compared to that of cities in Germany, Britain, Poland, and elsewhere.

However Prague was not completely spared destruction of a different kind. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries's the picturesque Gothic Jewish Ghetto of Prague—part of the historic core—was demolished and replaced by residential blocks in the art nouveau style.

The development of Prague in the 19th century was likewise not typical: other European cities experienced major building booms, based on periods of powerful economic expansion, with the reconstruction of large sectors incorporating new communications networks.

In contrast, Prague was then a provincial town, denied the role of a capital cities between the early 17th century and the end of the First World War, and failed to undergo such radical development. Thus Prague preserved in its extensive central core not only the medieval [Romanesque and

Gothic] street network, but also the scale character and appearance of a medieval town.

The communist era [1948-1989] brought yet another form of destruction, that of deterioration through neglect: the lack of new investment and grossly inadequate maintenance, including historic buildings. This era was marked by the very different priorities for development characteristic of the ideologies of Communist societies.

There were, however, beneficial side-effects. Prague did not suffer the wave of commercialization which has transformed so profoundly the faces of Western European cities after the Second World War. Prague has been spared the vast out of scale transformations of the ground floors of buildings into shops.

The historic area has not been disfigured by the construction of aesthetically and dimensionally inappropriate structures or facades being obliterated by advertisements. The city center has not been invaded by motorways, garages, filling stations and similar facilities.

Development from a variety of historic periods have created a rounded and coherent complex. Prague does not - as with so many historic towns - consist of a spread of historic monuments separated by intervening modern townscapes. The city core has a continuity of historic townscape expressing a milieu of character, atmosphere and scale.

It is typical for Prague's core - and this lends it a special attractiveness - that streets and quarters have a mix of buildings from differing periods. Furthermore - and again typically - it is possible to find combinations from very different historic periods within one construction.

A good example is the Charles bridge itself: built in the 14th century in the Gothic style of the time, but decorated around three hundred years later by dozens of sculptor of highest Baroque style.

2. The Current Policy of the City for the Development of the Historic Core

2.1. Land Use Issue

The aim (of the new City Master Plan) is to preserve a specific level of permanent residents in the historic core: the current level of around 65,000 residents should not be allowed to fall to less than around 50,000 residents.

The historic core should become neither a sterile open air museum nor a commercial office-dominated downtown devoid of residents and life after working hours. To achieve this aim will require an effective housing policy, especially with regard to social structure which at present includes large proportions of old and poor.

The city authorities are faced with strong pressures to convert apartments into offices, hotels, shops and the like; Similarly we must preserve a range of facilities for local residents, especially

convenient shopping which is presently being eroded by specialist, luxury goods shopping for tourists.

The city also aims to reduce pressure on space by decreasing the number of jobs in this area by around 10-15% by offering attractive development sites outside of the historic core. These measure should likewise decrease the volume of traffic in this sensitive area.

2.2. Conservation of the Historic Core

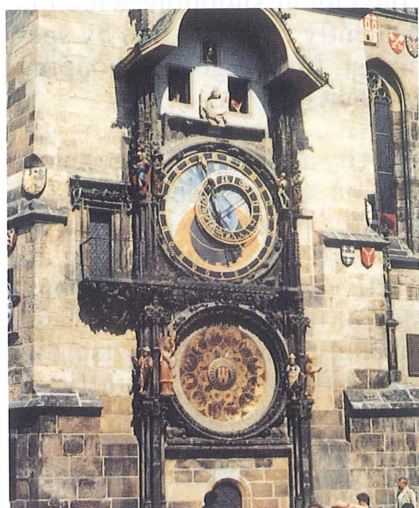
All construction activities in the historic core must respect the principles and requirements of the conservation of monuments. The demands of conservation measures cause longer, more difficult and more expensive development processes, but nevertheless they must be carried out to the full.

The aims of modernization include not only requirements to achieve proper standards of housing and office use, but also to free the buildings of worthless later constructions and changes which detract from valuable historic forms.

The future will see establishment of a fund for targeted subsidies for conservation measures



Classical Panorama of Prague



Astronomical Clock

for historic buildings.

2.3. Modernisation of Technical Infrastructure

The modernisation and maintenance of infrastructure was systematically neglected during the forty years of communism and there are complex and difficult problems in this sphere as a result.

The situation is likely to become even more complicated through a number of factors: the expected influx of rich newcomers into the historic area; the requirements for the care of monuments; and - not least - by the radical changes in ownership patterns following

the restitution of property confiscated by the communist and now steadily being returned to previous owners or their descendants.

Large-scale redevelopment has already begun of the system of deep common conduit, (conduit tunnels), providing a new basic infrastructure for the historic core. District heating and energy supply systems are being strengthened.

2.4. Environmental Problems

Prague's historic core suffers from a range of environmental problems caused mainly by its geographic character. The configuration of the land is most unsuitable for natural ventilation and is the main factor in the high levels of air pollution caused initially by traffic and coal-fired boilers.

The city architects and planners are now researching into non-traditional means of development - for example, building over rail tracks and other infrastructure features. To help in this process, a number of design competitions have been organized, mainly with international participation.

3. Conclusions

Prague is very proud of the cultural riches, beauty and vitality within its historic core. This exceptional privilege brings great admiration and floods of tourists, but it also brings severe problems and onerous financial demands.

To imagine that all these demands can be met in all circumstances is outside of the realm of reality. We must always be searching for painful compromises amongst the many parties with legitimate interests on the historic core: it is often the case that the various public authorities, with their various legal duties, will have to withdraw from entrenched positions.

An alternative answer is to use methods of the communist era and override the economic imperatives of the market and the wishes and needs of owners. This was possible under communism, with its different priorities, planning and decisions-making systems and without private ownership. Today free-market economy and liberal democracy make such methods impossible to sustain and inapplicable to Prague's historic core.



Church of St. Nicolas

General Assembly of the League of Historical Cities

The General Assembly of the League of Historical Cities was held in Xian on September 10, 1996.

Twenty-six of the forty-eight members and some non-members with an observer status participated in the General Assembly.

The Covenant of the League of Historical Cities was adopted and the principal officers were elected at this assembly.

The draft covenant suggested by the secretariat was adopted without changes.

The City of Kyoto was unanimously elected as the Chairperson. The tenure of the office is four years. Additionally, seven cities were elected as Directors and one city as the Auditor.

The Chairperson appointed two of the directors, Paris and Xian, to the position of Vice-chairperson. The Board of Directors meeting, following the General Assembly, approved the applications for League membership by six cities.

It was agreed that Montpellier will hold the Seventh Conference in the year 2000.



The host of the 6th Conference is already set to be Cracow, Poland.

The budget and the project plan was approved for the fiscal year 1997.

This includes the publication of this bulletin, the enactment of a symbol mark and the installation of Internet capabilities to facilitate the exchange of information between League members.

Principal Officers

Chairperson	KYOTO
Directors	XIAN(Vice -Chairperson)
	CRACOW
	ALEXANDRIA
	KATMANDU
	PARIS(Vice -Chairperson)
	RIO DE JANEIRO
	ZURICH
Auditor	KYONGJU

New Member Cities

- Helsingborg(Sweden)
- Cordoba(Spain)
- Iasi(Romania)
- Montpellier(France)
- Santiago de Compostela(Spain)
- Yangon(Myanmar)

The League of Historical Cities List

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Accra (Republic of Ghana) | Florence (Republic of Italy) | Nanjing (People's Republic of China) |
| Alexandria (Arab Republic of Egypt) | Guadalajara (United Mexican States) | Paris (French Republic) |
| Amsterdam (Kingdom of the Netherlands) | Hanoi (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam) | Prague (Czech Republic) |
| Athens (Hellenic Republic) | Helsingborg(Sweden) | Quebec (Canada) |
| Barcelona (Spain) | Iasi(Romania) | Rio de Janeiro (Federative Republic of Brazil) |
| Bordeaux (French Republic) | Isfahan (Islamic Republic of Iran) | Rome (Republic of Italy) |
| Boston (United States of America) | Istanbul (Republic of Turkey) | Santiago de Compostela(Spain) |
| Bratislava (Slovak Republic) | Jerusalem (State of Israel) | Tashkent (Republic of Uzbekistan) |
| Brussels (Kingdom of Belgium) | Kaesong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) | Tunis (Republic of Tunisia) |
| Budapest (Republic of Hungary) | Katmandu (Kingdom of Nepal) | Ulan Bator (Mongolia) |
| Chiang Mai (Kingdom of Thailand) | Kiev (Ukraine) | Varanasi (India) |
| Cologne (Federal Republic of Germany) | Kyongju (Republic of Korea) | Vienna (Republic of Austria) |
| Cordoba(Spain) | Kyoto (Japan) | Xian (People's Republic of China) |
| Cracow (Republic of Poland) | Lahore (Islamic Republic of Pakistan) | Yangon(Myanmar) |
| Cusco (Republic of Peru) | Lisbon (Portuguese Republic) | Yogyakarta (Republic of Indonesia) |
| Dublin (Ireland) | Melbourne (Australia) | Zagreb (Republic of Croatia) |
| Edinburgh (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) | Mexico City (United Mexican States) | Zurich(Swiss Confederation) |
| Fez (Kingdom of Morocco) | Montreal (Canada) | |
| | Montpellier(France) | |

Xian declaration

A Declaration at the Fifth World Conference of Historical Cities



From September 10 - 12 1996, the city of Xian in the People's Republic of China hosted the Fifth World Conference of Historical Cities. An ancient capital with a history of over 3,000 years, Xian welcomed 167 officials and scholars from fifty-one cities of thirty-nine countries around the world for this meeting. The Conference was a complete success in which the twenty-six members deliberated and then adopted the Covenant of the League of Historical Cities. The leadership of the league was elected for the positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairman, Directors and Auditor. The secretariat of the League remains based in Kyoto, Japan.

We all hold that : urban civilization is an important symbol and a miniature of the development of human civilization general :every historical city in different quarters of the world is a faithful record of the quintessence of human civilizations pertaining to divergent historical periods, geographical regions and cultural styles, beyond the capacity of the most modern and sophisticated scientific or technological means to represent or create, and with inherent value defying any attempt to subject it to tangible standards of evaluation.

Historical records and our experiences show that warfare, destructive natural disasters and irrational development and utilization of resources have threatened and damaged historical cities to varied degrees. Consequently preserving our environment, combating natural disasters and minimizing their consequences have become primary considerations in urban planning.

We appeal for peace and the end of war. Not only will this save lives and urban civilization, but also prevent humanity from destruction and self slaughter.

We all stand for development. Only by implementing carefully planned strategies of urban development it is possible to inject new vitality into historical cities, re-

juvenate their contemporary spirit and make adequate preservation of the historical outlook.

The charm of human civilization lies in the admirable achievements previously attained, but to an even greater degree it lies in the more splendid accomplishments people will be making on the basis of the former achievements. A problem confronting us is how to undertake preservation of fine historical and cultural heritages in the course of modern construction in order for the sophisticated science and

technology and new philosophies of thinking of modern civilization and the ancient simplicity and grandness of traditional culture to achieve mutual assimilation and synergy in cities that contain the condensed cultural quintessence.

As we are on the threshold of the 21st century, we have the obligations to preserve and continue these crystallizations of human civilization and make this precious heritage symbolizing the progress of human civilization better reflect histories, enhance cultural cohesion and inspire revelations to our posterity by revitalizing historical cities through modernization efforts.

The conference calls for extensive international dialogue and cooperation for the preservation and development of historical cities so that, through the common endeavor of the government and the people, the awareness of preservation shall be strengthened, the level of development raised and any form of man made damage stopped, thus bequeathing our posterity with the precious legacy that they are entitled to,

As government officials and representatives of historical cities, which are the common wealth of humanity, we will, in our capacity, strive and take action for the preservation of historical and cultural heritages and the rejuvenation of historical cities. Meanwhile, we pay tribute and extend support to those who are putting their ideals into practice.

September 12, 1996.

New League Member Cities Digest

Helsingborg

(Sweden)

Mayor: Inger Anderson Sjostedt
 Population: 114,340
 Contact: Torkel Eriksson
 Museum Counsellor
 Helsingborgs radhus 251 89
 Helsingborg Sweden
 Tel: 46 42 10 6136 Fax: 46 42 10 4905



Helsingborg is beautifully situated at the straight of Oresund between Sweden and Denmark. Its history dates back to the Viking Age, when and up to 1658 the southern most part of Sweden belonged to Denmark. During that time the castle of Helsingborg (Karnan) was a stronghold for the Danish King. Since then the town has developed into one of the most important ports of Scandinavia and into an industrial, commercial and cultural center as well.

Cordoba

(Spain)

Mayor: Rafael Merino Lopez
 Population: 315,000
 Contact: Antonia Luisa Sola Navas
 Vice Mayor of Cordoba
 Address:
 Centro de Promocion y Difusion
 del Casco Historico Plaza de Juda Levi s/n
 Tel: 34 57 49 9930 Fax: 34 57 47 8050



This city's history is over 2,000 years old. The Romans made it capital of the rich province of the Baetica; with the Moslems it turned into the principal city and center of the Occidental Caliphate. Different cultures that meet in its grounds along the centuries enrich and stamp it. The Mosque Aljama, with a Christian cathedral, crowns the jewel made up by the white and mottled groups of dwellings of its historical center. This valuable setting was declared World Heritage City by the UNESCO in 1994.

Iasi

(Romania)

Mayor: Constantin Simirad
 Population: 400,000
 Contact: Elena Oazuc Monica Stanciu
 Officers
 Address:
 11 Stefan cel Mare si Sfânt Av. Iasi
 6600 Romania
 Tel: 40 32 14 1412 Fax: 40 32 21 1200



Iasi, one of the oldest towns in the area, constitutes the cultural capital of Romania and the most important historic, industrial and economic center of Eastern part of the country. Iasi is famous as the city of poetry and great romances. The Town of Seven Hills has more than 200 spots of tourist interest-monuments, museums, memorial houses, parks and public gardens; the tradition interfering with the modernity.

Montpellier

(France)

Mayor: Freche Georges
 Population: 270,000
 Contact: Zanchiello Alban
 Director of International Relations
 Address:
 Hotel de Ville 1 Place Francis Ponge
 34064 Montpellier Cedex 2 France
 Tel: 334 67 34 7005 Fax: 334 67 64 1459



Founded in 985 AD, Montpellier has since the 12th century been famous for its medical faculty. It has always been a cosmopolitan city, open to the sea and influences from all over the Mediterranean. It has numerous private houses dating to the 17th and 18th centuries. Later developments blend harmoniously with the old town; sensitive town planning, an emphasis on culture and the quality of life, a dynamic Technopolis.

Santiago de Compostela

(Spain)

Mayor: Xerardo Estevez Fernandez
 Population: 135,000
 Contact: Pablo Martinez
 Director Office European City of Culture 2000
 Address:
 Concello de Santiago Praza do Obradoiro
 s/n 15705 Santiago de Compostela Spain
 Tel: 34 81 54 23 42 Fax: 34 81 56 38 64



Political and administrative Capital of Galician Region, founded around Apostle James' tomb in 9th century, is archbishop's seat. Declared a World Heritage site in 1985. It is the most important touristic and cultural center in northwest Spain. The goal of the Saint-James Way was also declared a World Heritage site in 1993.

Yangon

(Myanmar)

Mayor: H.E. U. KO LAY
 Population: 5,000,000
 Contact: U AUNG ZAW HEIN
 Head of Mayor's office
 Address:
 City Hall 420/450 Mahabandoola Street
 Yangon Myanmar
 Tel: 95 1 24 6016 Fax: 95 1 24 6016



The origin of Yangon, capital city of the Union of Myanmar, can be traced back to the time of King Okklapa who built the city of Okklapa on the present site and the famous Shwedagon Pagoda in the 6th century B.C. From the 11th century, the King became known as Dagon and existed as an obscure fishing village, in 1755, King Alaungpaya conquer lower Myanmar and renamed the city as Yangon meaning "end of strife".

INTERVIEW

Madame H el ene Mac e de L epinay**Vice-Mayor for cultural affairs in Paris**

Your city is selected as Vice-chairperson, What is your aspiration as one of principal officers ?

First of all I would like to tell you that the city of Paris is very happy to be vice-chairman of the League of Historical Cities so expertly presided over by Kyoto.

In my capacity as deputy to the mayor of Paris in charge of culture, it seems fundamental to me to keep a double preoccupation in mind. That is to say the preservation of our historical heritage and the necessary evolution of our capital that must remain an important economic city.

It may sound presumptuous but in my view Paris historical heritage is particularly rich and dense. The city of Paris as a municipality (which is completely different from the Ministry of culture, answerable to the State) is responsible, among others, for 96 places of worship that is to say churches, temples and one synagogue. Among these places of worship, almost half of them are on the list of historical monuments and hence benefit from a specific protection. Many churches were built in the 16th and 17th century and their upkeep is very heavy.

Our heritage also includes civilian buildings like private mansions, remnants of our fortifications. These also deserve all our attention.

At the same time, Paris must develop its transportation network , which requires excavations to create new metro lines. Paris needs to build housing buildings, museums or li-



braries and must remain an important economic center for companies.

It is of course out of the question to sacrifice our heritage for modernity's sake but it is also out of the question not to face the challenges of the 21st century.

This is in my view our main challenge at the end of this century and millennium.

What do you expect of the League when each member city of the League deals with the common theme of conservation and development ?

It was a great pleasure for me to meet a large number of the League members on the occasion of the conference recently held in Xian. It was the first time that I represented Paris at one of these meetings and I have been surprised to see how the problems of our cities are similar, irrespective of their continent. There are of course differences and Alexandria

is not Paris, Helsingborg is not Kyoto but our concern for both development and preservation - this is not antinomic - brings us closer to each other.

I think an exchange of views on well defined issues like traffic for instance, a very topical theme in Paris at the moment, may enables us to confront our policies and give us new ideas. This seems very simple but we are only beginning in Paris to think about the role of the bicycle in the city !

I also believe that cultural exchanges on specific projects concerning music or fine arts for instance could afford us the opportunity to come closer to one another, to better know each other and to mutually enrich ourselves. Our skills and expertise are complementary and the League can be a wonderful place for exchanges.

Please give your message to members of the League of Historical Cities ?

During our meeting in Xian, we have welcomed new cities to the League. I sincerely hope that other cities will express the wish to join the League before our next meeting in Cracow. The development of our structures seems very important to me. The example provided by its members, that carry out a common reflection on city planning, contributes and will contribute to make cities aware of their responsibility in this field all over the world.

The League of Historical Cities Secretariat

International Relations Office, City of Kyoto, Teramachi Oike, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604, Japan/Phone +81-75-222-3072 Fax +81-75-222-3055