

The 7th World Conference of the League of Historical Cities
History of Value



July 5 - 8 2000 Montpellier (France)

The 7th World Conference of Historical Cities held in Montpellier, France from July 5 to 8, 2000.

The 7th World Conference of Historical Cities was held from July 5 to 8 in France, and its outcome was very successful. 53 cities (24 countries) gathered from all over the world and had meaningful discussions on the future of the historical cities under the theme of "History of Value".

In the General Assembly, the Montpellier Declaration was adopted. Please view the following for details:

MONTPELLIER DECLARATION

OF THE 7TH WORLD CONFERENCE OF HISTORICAL CITIES

On the occasion of the 7th Conference of the League of Historical Cities, the members representing the cities listed below hereby undertake to comply with the following articles:

1. To define and implement a truly coherent architectural approach with overall urban integration, within the framework of urban development expressing the historical dimension of the city, while remaining open to contemporary creation. This approach demands overall urban regulations (global defining Strategy, protection of sites and the environment, transport and ecomobility) and an urban policy providing an integral and sustainable urban development Strategy.
2. To affirm the historical quality of our cities and to respect the cultural and ideological diversity endemic to the history of the city and national legislation; making this diversity a part of the cultural-mosaic of the world, rather than neutralizing it.
3. To strive to ensure that the globalization generated by the new economy, the emergence of networks and peripheral flows develop in harmony with the importance of the city's historical heritage giving historical cities the opportunity to extend their influence worldwide.
4. To ensure that the development of tourism, the preservation of the patrimony and the environment take place in the interests of the permanent population, so that the wealth derived from economic activities is equally distributed, in order to enlist the support of the local inhabitants confronted with the presence of tourism.
5. To report their actions and any difficulties encountered in regarding the objectives defined in article 1 to 4.

Montpellier, July 7, 2000

The 7th World Conference of Historical Cities Summary of the presentation at the working session.

Workshop no. 1 Architectural Coherence and Urban Integration in Historic Cities

Mr. Vaissade Alain	Mayor of Geneva
Mr. Abreu Antonio	Deputy Mayor of Lisbon, in charge of the redevelopment of historic cities
Mr. Sun QingJun	Deputy Mayor of the city of Xian
Mr. Coulomb Rene	Director General of the Historic, Center of Mexico
Mr. Tropeano	President of the Association of Cities and Regions for European culture
Mrs. Berlanga	Representing the Mayor of Mexico
Mr. Vasconi	Architect
Mr. Volle	Moderator and Professor of Geography Paul-Valery University - Montpellier

The remarks on this subject have contributed to an interesting debate.

The ideas of architectural coherence and urban integration remain the inspiration of all public action.

The latter idea, broader and more general, justifies closer attention from politicians whereas the former idea seems more suited to a response from an artist or an ordinary citizen.

Past and modernity: a permanent confrontation in the historic city

Historical Cities represent our history, our heritage and we are the guardians of the cultural values and the architectural richness. Each historical city has also sought their urban qualities.

They must confront all the aggressions of our contemporary societies such as cars, poverty, mass tourism, pollution, an urban growth that stretches their territories. The speed and mobility of our modern era has replaced the slow maturation of a historic city.

Every speaker emphasized this permanent confrontation in the historic city, a confrontation between **the past and the modernity** which is seen in the architectural, technical, social and economic fields.

As it is impossible to repeat what has been done in the past without a danger of stagnation, it is necessary for us to accept a historical perspective which must be protected at all costs.

The historic city is a living entity in which contemporary life should be able to develop.

Our urban heritage must be part of the development of the modern city. "To modernize is not to make things look new, it is to integrate a rejuvenating element into old buildings."

Reconstructing the city: to conserve is to transform

The goal is that the redevelopment of the historical city should be qualitatively exacting and that all that is done today in a historical city should be based upon

the heritage of a historical city. Coherence at the planning stage is a prerequisite of coherent long term action. However, it is vital to consult the citizens in order to gain their commitment to the projects.

Conclusion

A general agreement was given on the following points in this working session. It seems necessary:

1. to devise a Global City Project which is coherent in architectural, urban and social terms.

It must also avoid uniformity and standardization.

2. to conceive of urban integration as a complex process with social significance.

3. to rid ourselves of paradigms both of a invasive modernity and also of a rigid conservation approach which advocates immobility in the interests of protection.

We are encouraged to choose the direction of the city, to make living there together with its motif, and to unveil the historic city as a contemporary living space.

**Workshop no. 2 Melting Pot of Cultures in Historic Cities:
The mediteranean example**

Mr. Jean Clos	Mayor of Barcelona
Mr. Max Rouquette	Writer
Ms. Cattarini	UNESCO
Mr. Pierre Pitiot	Director of International Mediterreanean Film Festival
Mr. Yves Larbiou	Moderator, Deputy Mayor in charge of Cultural Affairs

The City as melting pot: A function of geographical situation

On the major inland axes : Roman roads or pilgrims trails to Rome and Santiago de Compostella

Near the sea : trading-posts serving the entire Mediterranean basin

Such geographical situations of contact, of exchanges and of confrontation often between pagan peoples, Jews, Christians and Arabs encouraged a mixture of different peoples, different ideas and different practices.

This favoured a rich panoply of cultural, religious, scientific and economic activities in the fields of medicine, pharmacy, botany, Italian Banking techniques etc.

Economic development and democracy

The role and dynamism and wealth of the merchant class weakened the power both of priests and hereditary princes who were obliged to accept that their now-rich cities be governed by Consuls. This allowed the development of an initial form of democracy.

Mediterranean identity: a culture both many faceted and unique

Conquests, conflicts, resistance, banishment, welcome: The movements of history have led the populations of our cities into contact with others not only to reject them but also to take on board the new values which they brought.

This contact with other peoples implied a constant consideration of the difference between one's own identity and the values of others. Mutual assimilation gave rise to a culture with a taste for mixtures.

It becomes clear that the Mediterranean basin has been a cradle of creativity and of artistic expression, in spite of religious restrictions which forced that expression into other forms.

The sea and limited coastal space oblige Mediterraneans to transform and amplify all available space.

We have seen several examples of the dramatisation of space in both architecture and urban planning. We have also seen examples of the multiculturalism of cultural life.

A university city, Montpellier, welcome increasing numbers of students and researchers from all continents. The words of traveller Benyamin ben Yona of the 12th century, "one sees people of all languages in Montpellier" are truer today than ever.

As is the policy of UNESCO, we must face the challenge of globalisation by affirming the fertile diversity of our cultures and our heritages.

Our historical Mediterranean cities are the living examples of cities which have never closed in on themselves but, rather, have remained open to the buffetings of history, ceaselessly hungry to live, to develop and to expand.

But the story of these Mediterranean cities is also the story of all historic cities which have their own living identities and their own place in the mosaic of world cultures.

It was confirmed that it is necessary to protest against a standardization of culture.

