

The 19th World Conference of Historical Cities



WORLD HISTORICAL CITIES



135 Member Cities

AFRICA

Alexandria / Algiers / Fès / Giza / Luxor / Tunis

ASIA

Andong / Baglung / Bhotekoshi / Buyeo / Chengdu / Chiang Mai / Dujiangyan / Gongju / Gyeongju / Hanoi / Hariharpurgadhi / Harion / Himeji / Hue / Kaesong / Kamakura / Kanazawa / Kathmandu / Kurunegala / Kyoto / Lahore / Masuda / Matsue / Nanjing / Nara / Shankharapur / Sunkoshi / Suwon / Taichung / Tainan / Ulaanbaatar / Varanasi / Vigan / Vyas / Wuxi / Xi'an / Yangon / Yangzhou / Yogyakarta / Zhengzhou

EUROPE

Alba Iulia / Amsterdam / Athens / Bad Ischl / Barcelona / Bordeaux / Bratislava / Brussels / Budapest / Chernivtsi / Cologne / Constanța / Córdoba / Corinth / Dublin / Edinburgh / Florence / Geneva / Helsingborg / Iași / Izhevsk / Kazan / Klaipeda / Kraków / Kutaisi / Kyiv / Lisbon / Ljubljana / Lutsk / Lviv / Minsk / Montpellier / Mtskheta / Nicosia / Niš / Norwich / Odesa / Paris / Prague / Riga / Rome / Santiago de Compostela / Sarajevo / Sheki / Shusha / South East Region of Malta / Strasbourg / Tashkent / Termez / The Hague / Veliko Tarnovo / Venice / Vienna / Vladimir / Zagreb

LATIN AMERICA

Cartagena / Cuenca / Cusco / Guadalajara / Mexico City

MIDDLE EAST

Ankara / Ardabil / Baghdad / Bursa / Hebron / Isfahan / Istanbul / Jerusalem / Kashan / Kong / Konya / Mashhad / Masouleh / Nayshabur / Osmangazi / Şanlıurfa / Selçuklu / Semnan / Shiraz / Tabriz / Tehran / Yazd

NORTH AMERICA

Boston / Montreal / Quebec

PACIFIC

Ballarat / Melbourne / Norwood Payneham and St Peters / Whanganui



Opening Remark
By Mr. Dejan Crnek, Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana

Contents

01. The 19th World Conference of Historical Cities
02. Ljubljana Declaration
03. Introduction of the New Member Cities
04. Report of FY2024 Board of Directors Meeting and FY2024 General Assembly
05. Greeting from the Mayor of Himeji, the Host City of the 20th World Conference

-Reviewing the Successful Conference-

The Conference began with the opening ceremony and the Keynote Speech by Prof. Janez Koželj, who explained the initiatives and efforts regarding walkability and eco-friendliness in Ljubljana. In the afternoon, representatives from six cities presented their strategies at the Round Table I under the theme of “Walkability as a factor in the quality and attractiveness of historic urban areas.” At the Round Table II, five cities made presentations on “Challenges and ways to implement sustainable mobility in historical cities.” In the evening, a welcome dinner was hosted by Mayor Jankovič at Ljubljana Castle.



Prof. Janez Koželj,
Former Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana



Asst. Prof. Rok Žnidaršič,
Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana



Matevž Čelik Vidmar, State Secretary
at Ministry of Culture of Slovenia

On the second day, the program started with an opening ceremony for the Youth Program. It was moderated by Ms. Mateja Demšič from the Department for Culture of the City of Ljubljana and two elementary school students in Ljubljana.

Also, the students from second to seventh grade, who participated in the program, were in attendance. The selection of excellent artworks created by children from Ljubljana and member cities was exhibited at the conference venue and recognized with commemorative gifts at the ceremony. There followed the Experts Meeting under the theme of “Sustainable mobility as a safeguard against the deterioration of cultural heritage” and discussions were held between Asst. Prof. Rok Žnidaršič, Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana, and Matevž Čelik Vidmar, State Secretary at the Ministry of Culture of Slovenia, trying to resolve issues from various perspectives and sharing ideas with participants. In the afternoon, there were organized the FY2024 Board of Directors Meeting (see 06) and the Excursion to Škofja Loka.

On the last day, participants took part in the Official City Tour featuring the works of Jože Plečnik. In the afternoon, the FY2024 General Assembly was held and a report of the Board of Directors Meeting was presented by the Chairperson and the Secretary General. At the end of the closing ceremony, the “Ljubljana Declaration” was adopted (see 02) as an outcome of the conference and signed by the representatives of the participating cities.



Mr. Dejan Crnek,
Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana

Mr. Zoran Jankovič,
Mayor of Ljubljana

Overview

- Venue: Centre Rog, Ljubljana Slovenia
- Date: November 12 – 14, 2024
- Theme: “Creating a Vibrant Walkable City Centre through Sustainable Urban Mobility”
- Languages: English and Japanese
- Participant Cities: 29 cities from 15 countries
- Number of Participants: 152 including elementary school students in Ljubljana, who took part in the Youth Program

We, the mayors of the member cities of the League of Historic Cities, gathered in Ljubljana for the 19th World Conference of Historic Cities, acknowledge our shared responsibility to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of our cities for the benefit of future generations. Our historic cities, rich in architectural, cultural, and social significance, are living testaments to human creativity and resilience. They are crucial for fostering identity, community cohesion, and sustainable development.

Recognizing the challenges posed by rapid urbanization, climate change, technological advancements, and social transformations, we are committed to safeguarding our historic cities as vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable spaces that honour our past while embracing the future.

In pursuit of these objectives, we hereby declare our collective commitment to the following principles:

1. Cultural Heritage Preservation

We will continue to protect and restore the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of our historic cities. Through careful conservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, monuments, and public spaces, we will ensure that the legacy of our cities is preserved for future generations.

2. Sustainable Urban Development

We commit to integrating sustainable practices into urban planning and development. By promoting walkability, green infrastructure, sustainable mobility, reducing carbon emissions, and prioritizing energy efficiency, we aim to create cities that are environmentally resilient while maintaining their historic character.

3. Cultural Exchange and Cooperation

We will continue to promote dialogue and cooperation between member cities, sharing knowledge, best practices, and expertise in the preservation and management of historic cities. Through cultural exchange, we will strengthen international understanding and solidarity, and contribute to global peace and stability.

4. Education and Awareness

We are committed to raising awareness about the importance of cultural heritage among the younger generations. By promoting public awareness campaigns, and organizing cultural events, we aim to inspire a sense of pride and responsibility for the preservation of our cities.

5. Inclusive and Accessible Cities

We will work towards creating cities that are accessible to all, regardless of age, ability, or socio-economic status. By ensuring that our historic environments are inclusive and welcoming, we reaffirm our commitment to fostering equity and social justice within our cities.

In signing this Declaration, we pledge to support and collaborate in our efforts to protect the cultural heritage of historic cities while promoting sustainable urban development and reaffirm our shared dedication to the values and principles of the League of Historic Cities. Let the 19th World Conference in Ljubljana mark a turning point in our collective efforts to ensure that historic cities remain beacons of cultural heritage, sustainable development, and global cooperation.

Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia,
November 14, 2024



The city of Shusha is a medieval castle town located in the west of Azerbaijan, on the slopes of the Lesser Caucasus mountains, at an altitude of 1300-1500 meters. Founded in the middle of the 18th century by the Khan of Karabakh, Panahali Khan, as the capital of the khanate, the city has had a special and turbulent history.

Since the three sides of the Shusha plateau where the city is located are steep rock-cliffs, the city has become an impregnable fortress with defensive walls only on one side of the city. Shusha, the city where the Karabakh khans lived, is the cradle of Azerbaijani culture, with the birthplace of many important figures in art and science. By the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated May 7, 2021, the city of Shusha was declared the cultural capital of Azerbaijan.

There are 17 historical mahallas (quarters) on the relatively flat lower part of the plateau where the city is located. Each mahalla had its own square, mosque, spring, and bath. Eye-catching mansions and stone houses with balconies decorate the winding streets of the city. The elegant houses built of local marble are decorated with delicate and simple ornaments carved from stone. The mosques of Karbalai Safi Khan in Shusha are an example of the Karabakh school of architecture formed over the centuries. Many of these monuments have become ruins in our days.

In 1992, a critical conflict erupted, which had continued for 28 years. During the conflict, all monuments located in the city were seriously damaged, many of which were destroyed. Currently, 196 historical architectural monuments in Shusha are under state protection.

After the conflict, a large-scale construction, restoration, improvement and clearing of areas began in just a few months. The Shusha City State Reserve Department was established to ensure flexibility and efficiency in organizing reconstruction efforts. Creation of favorable conditions for the full use of the historical, cultural, tourism and recreational potential of Shusha City has been defined as the direction of the Department's activities. Starting from 2024, the displaced population of the city is expected to return.

To systematically protect the historical urban landscape and architectural value of the city, all historical architectural monuments have been taken into the newly prepared master plan and are planned for restoration in the future. At present, the new buildings being built and designed in the city are done in consideration of the buildings with architectural value and for the preservation of the historical city environment and structure.

In the last three years, 17 historical monuments, including mosques, caravansaries, fountains, and residential houses, have already been restored and used in the city. Larger-scale restoration and conservation works are expected to be carried out in the coming years. The restored buildings are adapted to social, public and tourist purposes. The historical stone-pavement is preserved in the street design works and the main elements that make up the historical urban landscape are preserved. The restoration process involves the use of local building materials, studies, and traditional techniques.

Although reviving the ruined city takes a long time and great resources, Shusha is already welcoming its first residents and tourists.



Shusha, Azerbaijan

In Membership since 2022

Corinth, Greece

In Membership
since 2023

The historic city of Corinth served as the crossroads where Western and Eastern civilizations met, becoming a brilliant center of trade, culture, and technology. Its economy was based on intense commercial activity, pottery, and masterful shipbuilding, leaving an indelible mark on ancient history.

Undoubtedly, its two ancient harbors, Lechaion and Kechries, along with the Diolkos (later replaced by the Corinth Canal), are remarkable engineering works that served as vital gateways for transporting goods and ideas across the wider Mediterranean region. Corinthian triremes and colonies such as Syracuse, Corfu, Fier, Potidaea, and Actium demonstrate its influence.

Its cultural heritage in art and architecture evidences the exquisite harmony and elegance of the Corinthian order. Corinthian pottery, with its exceptional craftsmanship and aesthetics, was distributed throughout the Mediterranean, gaining admiration and recognition.

The visit of Apostle Paul in 51 A.D. brought the establishment of the Christian community as a wind of change and renewal.

Today, Corinth is a vibrant destination that combines the past with the present, offering unforgettable experiences and unique memories to all visitors. The Municipality of Corinth, with respect for its historical and cultural heritage, aims by 2025 to establish the region as a top destination for authentic and sustainable experiences. The strategy focuses on enhancing thematic forms of tourism, such as cultural, religious, and experiential one, contributing to the region's competitiveness and global visibility.

PILGRIMAGE AND RELIGIOUS TOURISM

The Steps of Apostle Paul

The promotion of Apostle Paul's stay and activities in Corinth is a priority. In collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Corinth is planning to develop soft infrastructure along the land route followed by Apostle Paul. This cultural, hiking, and pilgrimage trail includes stations and sites visited by Apostle Paul throughout the country. The route from the ancient port of Kechries to ancient Corinth has already been marked.



CULTURAL TOURISM

Unification and Enhancement of Archaeological Sites

The Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Corinth collaborate to unify archaeological sites with cultural hubs of the city and to upgrade services for visitors, thereby enhancing cultural tourism and creating spaces for culture and recreation. The plan includes:

•Improved Accessibility:

Traffic adjustments and elevator access for people with disabilities.

•New Infrastructure:

Gift shops, exhibition spaces, and a new Archaeological Museum on the Xenias Hill in Ancient Corinth.

•Monument Connectivity:

Walking trails and the creation of a "Northern Archaeological Park."

•Restorations:

Restoration of the South Stoa of Ancient Corinth and other significant buildings.

EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM - HIKING

The Municipality of Corinth, rich in history and natural beauty, is emerging as a hiking tourism destination by utilizing its ancient paths. Its strategic location, cultural heritage, extensive coastline, and natural beauty create the conditions for year-round tourism, offering visitors a comprehensive experience.

Benefits of trail networks include:

- Preservation, protection, and promotion of the countryside, cultural heritage, and tradition.
- Effective protection and management of areas of exceptional natural beauty and sensitive ecosystems.
- Promotion of health and physical fitness for citizens and visitors.
- Connection of sites of special interest, including natural, historical, cultural, or other monuments and attractions.
- Support for local prosperity through revenue, job creation, and local product promotion.
- Increased land value of nearby properties.
- Support for efforts to prevent and address natural disasters (e.g., floods, fires).
- Provision of green oases in urban areas, contributing to decongestion, pollution reduction, and solving urban problems.



04

Report of FY2024 Board of Directors Meeting and FY2024 General Assembly

FY2024 Board of Directors Meeting was held with full attendance of all eight Director Cities. New membership for Baglung, Sunkoshi, Bhotekoshi (Nepal), and Mashhad (Iran) were approved, and the current total number of member cities is 135 in 65 countries and regions. Afterwards, presentations were given by four candidate host cities for the 20th and 21st World Conferences. The votes by representatives of Director Cities decided on Himeji (Japan) for the 20th Conference (2026), and Isfahan (Iran) for the 21st Conference (2027).



Board Members Chair: Kyoto Vice Chairs: Xi'an and Konya
Directors: Gyeongju, Ljubljana, Bad Ischl, Shiraz, and Kraków



At the FY2024 General Assembly, new member cities that had joined after the FY2022 General Assembly in Andong were introduced. The Secretariat reported the FY2023 activities and accounting, as well as the FY2024 activities and budget plan and announced host cities for the 20th and 21st World Conferences to be Himeji and Isfahan. The General Assembly concluded with a speech by Mayor Altay (Konya), Vice Chair, summarizing the accomplishments of the 19th conference and expressing his confidence that experiences and exchanges would contribute to the preservation and development of each member city and be passed on to future generations.

05

Greeting from the Mayor of Himeji, the Host City of the 20th World Conference

We are very pleased and honored that Himeji has been selected as the host city for the 20th World Conference of Historical Cities and that we can have the opportunity to welcome you from around the world in 2026.

The City of Himeji joined the League of Historical Cities in 2021. We attended the 19th World Conference in 2024 onsite in Ljubljana and learnt about diverse policies implemented by member cities.

Himeji is a city with history and culture, symbolized by Himeji Castle, which was built more than 400 years ago and the first site in Japan inscribed on the World Heritage List. The city is rich in local resources, including numerous cultural property and festivals, traditional crafts, and local industries.

With our experience of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that occurred in 1995, we have been promoting initiatives to make our city resilient in order to secure the citizens' livelihood and pass down our succeeded heritage and traditions to future generations.

Furthermore, we have proactively worked on sustainable urban development, addressing global-scale issues such as climate change in recent years and declaring our aim to make Himeji a "zero-carbon city" by 2050.

The World Conference is a valuable platform for historical cities to share experiences and achievements for the challenges we are faced with. At the 20th Conference, we would like to share our experiences and initiatives for a resilient and sustainable future with you and discuss challenges and policies to pass down our heritage to the next generation.

We look forward to welcoming you in 2026 with programs that enable you to experience our history and culture.



KIYOMOTO Hideyasu
 Mayor of Himeji



The League of Historical Cities Secretariat

Teramachi-Oike, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604-8571 Japan
lhcsc@city.kyoto.lg.jp <https://www.lhc-s.org>