

PRESS RELEASE

ICOMOS collaborates with Eesti Kunstiakadeemia/Estonian Academy of Arts to organise a capacity building summer school for Heritage Alert and Advocacy

ICOMOS International in collaboration with EKA's Cultural Heritage & Conservation Department conducted a week-long Global inter-university summer-school on Heritage Alert and Advocacy from 9 to 13 August, 2021. This summer school was designed to actively engage students and emerging professionals in the preparation of heritage alerts, and recognising the threat to heritage as a global phenomenon. The course was a follow-up to the ICOMOS study - Analyzing the Effectiveness of the 'Heritage at Risk' Initiatives by Jayashree Bardhan, BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany.

A total of 50 students representing 24 countries from 14 different universities spread across 5 continents participated in this one of a kind colloquium. A diverse group of experts, including many ICOMOS International Board members were invited to share their thoughts and experience as tutors. A committed group of ICOMOS Emerging Professionals' facilitated group work as tutor assistants. During this training, the students were asked to complete two exercises: 1. Analysing follow up action of previously released heritage alerts 2. Preparing a Heritage Alert for newly identified sites that are in danger. Other than the exercise, special lectures, discussions, and group consultation sessions with the tutors and tutor assistants enabled the students to carry out the assignments and facilitated peer learning.

The workshop encouraged participants to evaluate the effectiveness of heritage alerts as an advocacy tool; assess the workability of the format, process and timelines currently in place. For instance, should heritage alerts be released in a two-fold process to ensure community support can be garnered in a timely manner? How comprehensive should the alert document be? How promptly should the documents be collated?

Riin Alatalu, vice-president of ICOMOS says that the intensive summer-school enabled students to test the influence of ICOMOS working methods. She commended the dedication of ICOMOS colleagues, the enthusiasm of the students and especially the creative and professional approach of Emerging Professionals who conducted as tutor assistants the challenging work in groups comprised of students from different regions. She noted that the summer-school has to be followed by discussions with national committees and scientific committees to analyze the existing alerts and improve the practice of alerting on dangers to heritage.

Kadri Kallast, a student of cultural heritage at EKA says "It was very fascinating to learn more about the nature of ICOMOS's work and get to know the people who lead it – commitment

and dedication had a very inspiring and optimistic effect on students. The task of group work to compile a heritage alert, created an opportunity to contribute to solving current problems. This process provided much food for thought about the opportunities and strengths of international co-operation on heritage protection, but also about bottlenecks, especially in terms of communication between very different cultural spaces – how to offer advice and assistance in a way that leads to dialogue and co-operation rather than conflict?”

Gizem Senel, another participant from Yildiz Technical University, Turkey says “It was an excellent experience to be involved in an ICOMOS workshop. I’m glad that despite all the distance, differences in time, language and experience, we could all gather around the same concerns this week. It was fulfilling to see how many professionals are out there willing to make a difference. I hope to take part in further organizations in the future.”

With this collaboration, ICOMOS International proposes to build capacity on heritage alert and advocacy within the student community and emerging professionals. It also acknowledges the need for swift and region-specific action to protect cultural heritage properties worldwide.

Photos from the workshop: [Click here](#)

About EKA

EKA (Eesti Kunstiakadeemia/Estonian Academy of Arts) is the only public university in Tallinn, Estonia that impart higher education in art, design, architecture, media, and art history. Heritage protection and conservation have been taught at the Estonian Academy of Arts for a quarter of a century, and the academy has become an important Estonian center of competence in UNESCO world heritage issues.

About ICOMOS International

ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites) is a non-governmental international organisation dedicated to the conservation of the world's monuments and sites. ICOMOS operates through a network of experts that benefits from the interdisciplinary exchange of its members, among which are architects, historians, archaeologists, art historians, geographers, anthropologists, engineers and town planners. ICOMOS is active in over 100 countries and operates 28 different international scientific committees.:

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