

## THE PRESERVATION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IN THE LIGHT OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES IN BULGARIA

The architectural heritage left to us by the past marks the stages of the material, economic and social development of the peoples who inhabited our lands and testifies to the existence of a fine building culture and of aesthetic and artistic conceptions as well as to a skilful combination of the buildings with natural assets.

The history of the last century — the Bulgarian National Revival, is an illustration of an architecture possessing a rich gamut of forms and solutions, its own specific material structures, tonality and artistic representation. Here we can mention the wonderful architectural ensembles in some monasteries and the integrated and uniform architecture settlements of Koprivshtitsa, Tryavna, Zheravna Bozhentsi, Shiroka Luka, and Arbanassi, where the variety of architectural forms, the feeling for the volume and spatial composition and the original urban ideas form the characteristic features of our settlements dating from the last century. With its fine artistic qualities our Revival architecture is unique in the history of world architecture.

As is known, architecture has always been playing the role of synthesizing art which organizes the environment as a medium of social life, determines the place of the separate structural elements of society and unifies all this into the architectonic image of an art which has gathered in itself many other kinds of artistic creativeness — painting, monumental sculpture, decorative and applied art.

The great social and political changes which have taken place in our country after the Second World War set up vast opportunities for intensive creative activities not least in the field of culture.

Our architectural heritage became generally known, it became a national property and part and parcel of the material and spiritual values of the Republic. That is why the activities for the preservation of this architectural heritage have also a very short history. They began their existence in a planned and organized way only after September 9, 1944, as a result of a new policy, as a phenomenon of the new socialist society which had already surmounted national nihilism and was linking its present with the progressive traditions of the past.

A series of state documents, decisions and decrees of the Council of Ministers, as well as the Law on the Monuments of Culture and the Museums from 1969 were the basis on which the structure of the different state bodies and institutions concerned with the preservation of the architectural monuments have been built. They are the following:

*The National Institute for the Monuments of Culture* at the Committee for Art and Culture (set up in 1957) which is the administrative, methodological and executive body concentrating all state activities for the study, documentation, registration, conservation and restoration of the monuments, as well as the solution of the scientific problems connected with them.

*The Councils for Art and Culture* at the District People's Councils which are the managing bodies of the architectural heritage. They plan the means for the preservation in general and take care of the physical protection of the monuments.

*The Bodies of the Ministry of Building and Architecture* which are in charge of the development, the building and the architectural aspect of the settlements. They assist the solution of the problems for the preservation of the architectural heritage in the framework of the government policy for the development and the building-up of the settlements

*The Section for Theory and History of the Settlements Development and Architecture* at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences which is in charge of the solution of the theoretical problems and the elucidation of certain scientific items connected with the historical development of the architectural heritage.

At the *Union of Bulgarian Architects* there is a creative group under the name of "Architectural Heritage Group" which is doing an intensive public work on the popularization of the Bulgarian architecture by organizing meetings, lectures, publications, trips, projections of films and other activities.

Which are the main aspects of the solicitude for the preservation of the architectural heritage? Something new and enormous, something which surpasses the framework of the administration and the law — this is the social-governmental principle, which has interwoven its lifegiving roots into the

solicitude for the preservation of the architectural heritage, that is, the voluntary participation in these activities of hundred of thousands of Bulgarian citizens making their creative contribution.

The restoration of all architectural monuments is carried out with *Grants by the State* disregarding whether they are private possessions, cooperative or state property. After the restoration of the monument its owner continues to exploit it as his own property and is not liable to taxation by the state.

The monuments of architecture cannot be *overinhabited*. The number of the tenants of the houses-monuments is fixed by the respective state organs who also control their exploitation.

All architectural monuments of greater artistic, scientific and historical value *are nationalized* and are the object of special care.

The ancient architectural monuments, individual settlements or only their older parts are declared *architectural preserves* or *museum settlements*.

In this respect the Law on the Territorial and Settlement-Development provides for a series of items which settle the questions for the preservation of the architectural monuments.

Thus the regimen for the construction of new buildings in the old settlements, their quarters, streets and lots or in proximity to individual houses-monuments *is determined by Special Authorizations*, while the designs for such new buildings should be *approved* by the National Institute for the Monuments of Culture.

A fine new and prospective form of the organization of the care for the best preservation of the architectural heritage in some museum settlements is to grant them the right to self administration. The Old Town of Plovdiv for instance was granted such a right of administration and independent administrative bodies have been functioning there for some years.

The architectural monuments from the past are our national capital and the care for their preservation is the cause of the entire Bulgarian people. This nation-wide cause was recognized and obtained a high international assessment whose expression is the esteem shown on the part of UNESCO and the organization of the present symposium of ICOMOS in our country.

Stefan MATEEV, Bulgaria

## RESUME

*Les grands changements sociaux et politiques, survenus en Bulgarie après la seconde guerre mondiale, ont ouvert de vastes possibilités à la créativité dans le domaine culturel.*

*La politique de sauvegarde du patrimoine architectural prit corps après les décisions du 9 septembre 1944.*

*Les institutions qui, à l'heure actuelle, participent à sa conservation sont:*

— l'Institut National des Monuments Historiques,  
— les Conseils d'Art, auprès des Conseils départementaux,

— les services responsables de l'urbanisme, de la construction et de l'aspect architectural des agglomérations, au Ministère de la Construction et de l'Architecture,

— la Section de théorie et d'histoire de l'urbanisme et de l'architecture au sein de l'Académie des Sciences,

— le groupe de travail „Patrimoine architectural“ de l'Union des Architectes de Bulgarie.

*Les principes fondamentaux de la sauvegarde du patrimoine architectural sont les suivants:*

1. *La restauration est effectuée aux frais de l'Etat, quelque soit le propriétaire du monument.*

2. *Toute surdensité d'occupation est interdite dans les monuments.*

3. *Les monuments d'un très grand intérêt sont nationalisés pour leur assurer une meilleure sauvegarde et une utilisation éventuelle.*

4. *Une partie des agglomérations, ou leur noyau ancien, sont déclarés secteurs sauvegardés.*

5. *Les projets de constructions nouvelles dans les agglomérations anciennes sont soumis à l'accord de l'Institut National des Monuments Historiques.*

6. *Les parties d'agglomérations protégées — zones-musées et secteurs sauvegardés — ont une administration indépendante.*