

THE PÉCS DECLARATION ON THE VENICE CHARTER

Forty years ago the architects and technicians of historic monuments adopted the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites at their second Congress held in Venice, Italy. The need to create this document, given the title the Venice Charter, as well as the wise and prudent judgment of its creators – shown by the concepts in the Charter – has been convincingly proven by the considerable historic strides that have been made and the experience that has been gained since that time.

ICOMOS, an organisation whose establishment was conceived at the same time that the Charter was created and which has increasingly striven to propagate the spirit of the Charter and increase its recognition, has – at the invitation of its Hungarian national committee and the city of Pécs – dedicated this professional conference to the commemoration of the Charter's 40th anniversary.

The participants have first and foremost paid tribute with respect and gratitude to those that conceived and drafted the Charter. In recognition of the work of their predecessors, the participants of the congress have deemed it fitting to issue the following suggestions and recommendations that they have formulated about the Venice Charter during this celebratory conference.

1. The Venice Charter has in the last forty years maintained its guiding, leading position in the area of historic monument conservation and restoration due to its explicit directives on the one hand and its flexibility on the other.
2. The subsequent Charters providing specific guidance for particular fields of historic monument and heritage preservation - also for their environments - or aiding the implementation of the principles in the light of specific regional circumstances, are useful supplements which continue to build upon the solid foundations of the Venice Charter. In this context the "Nara Document on Authenticity" is also one of the most important supplements .
3. The Charter of Venice is the basic document for the long term preservation of historic monuments and heritage, intending to maintain and emphasize enduring principles which allows practical applications for the different cultural regions and periods. It is now necessary also to focus on the long-term preventive maintenance of sites within an overall framework of management to protect their significance.
4. It is the right and duty of each and every new generation of conservation and restoration professionals in different cultural regions to examine, understand and interpret the guidelines contained in the Charter of Venice over and over again.

This should be done without restrictions or preconceptions, taking into account new challenges appearing in the field of restoring and conserving historic monuments. An important task should be to clarify subsequent interpretations of the Charter.

5. Based upon the cultural diversity ICOMOS proposes a translation of the Charter of Venice for every country, nationality or ethnic group, that does not have access to a version of the Charter in its native language. This should take place no later than the 45th anniversary of adoption of the Charter. A more precise re-examination and correction of the existing translations is also recommended.

6. With special regard to the Venice Charter as fundamental guidance there is an urgent need to establish an International Scientific Committee in order to monitor and guide the evolving development of conservation doctrine. This concept was already brought forward in the 9th General Assembly of ICOMOS, held in Lausanne 1990. Today, in the globalising world-society there is an ever-increasing need to respond to the new challenges with which we are confronted.
7. The best and most instructive cases involving the implementation of the Venice Charter in the last 40 years should be made available to a wider public, also through the new media. The National Committees and the International Scientific Committees of ICOMOS should therefore compile, publish and make available case studies that may provide valuable experience. This method of accessing information will enrich the international community of professionals of restoration and conservation. And in this way the worldwide dimension of ICOMOS will be underlined.

Pécs, 27th May 2004