

Lisbon, 20 November 2009

Launching Colloquy of

« Heritage and Beyond »

a publication on the contribution of the Council of Europe
Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage for
society (Faro Convention)

Dr Noel Fojut, Moderator

Report on the colloquy « Heritage and Beyond »

Report on the colloquy « Heritage and Beyond » held at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, on 20 November 2009.

Note: the following report is highly selective, touching only upon a few key themes dealt with by each speaker. It does not attempt to be an authoritative record of the detailed contents of each presentation. This would be impossible given the high quality and detail contained within each. The texts of almost all of the day's presentations may be accessed on the Council of Europe's website(www.coe.int/heritage) in a [special file](#).

Purpose

The colloquy marked the launch the publication of the same name, « Heritage and Beyond », on the contribution of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society (Faro Convention), organized by the Council of Europe, the « Centro Nacional de Cultura » and IGESPAR (Instituto de Gestão do Património Arquitectónico), with the support of the Gulbenkian Foundation. The gathering was graced by the presence of Ms Gabriela Canavilhas, Portugal's Minister of Culture, Portugal and of a number of serving and retired government ministers, and attended by senior officials of many national and international heritage agencies, universities, non-governmental organisations and other bodies, from Europe and beyond. The audience also included a sizeable number of interested members of the public and students from the Lisbon area.

Welcomes

The proceedings were opened by short speeches of welcome (for the delegates and for the publication) from Ms Teresa Patrício Gouveia of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, who introduced Mr Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins (former Minister, President of the Centro Nacional de Cultura, Lisbon), followed by M. Gonçalo Couceiro (Director, IGESPAR (Instituto de Gestão do Património Arquitectónico e Arqueológico), Lisbon), Mr Robert Palmer (Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage, Council of Europe), Mr Stojan Pelko (State Secretary of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia). The principal speech of welcome, and the declaration that the colloquy was open, was given by Ms Gabriela Canavilhas (Minister of Culture, Portugal).

Proceedings

The majority of speakers had also contributed papers to the publication, and this event offered an opportunity for them to update and underline key aspects of their perspectives on three key topics, which provided the structure of the day. Dr Noel Fojut (Historic Scotland, United Kingdom) acted as moderator throughout the proceedings, and introduced the themes of the day:

- Heritage and a new culture of development: sustainable use of resources, local prosperity and collective benefits
- Heritage and management of change: values for a Europe of diversity and dialogue

- Shared responsibility, partnership and participation: heritage as a factor for democratic involvement

Theme 1: Heritage and a new culture of development: sustainable use of resources, local prosperity and collective benefits was introduced by Dr Fojut, who drew attention to the changing paradigm for heritage in relationship to physical and cultural development, from the traditional “preserve heritage from development” to the new model of “preserve heritage by development” – the search for what had been described as “the heritage dividend”.

Mr Graham Fairclough (English Heritage, United Kingdom) spoke on the topic of *New Heritage Frontiers*. He contrasted the “old” and “new” convention approaches, in which he noted two modes of heritage – heritage as objects which we seek to preserve, and heritage as the process and philosophy of caring for these objects. He noted the ever-widening scope of heritage action, in both public and private sectors and welcomed the increasing acceptance of multiple values and perspectives, in contrast with the old model of selective and expert-dictated designation and value systems. The future of heritage action, he proposed, lies in its ever-increasing interaction with living issues of a social, demographic, economic and environmental character.

Mr Donovan Rypkema (President, Heritage Strategies International, Washington DC, United States of America) addressed the topic of *Heritage Conservation as Sustainable Economic Development*. Regretting the frequent identification of “sustainable development” solely with the natural environment, he provided impressive statistics demonstrating the economic value of heritage conservation, in particular of historic buildings. The particular characteristics of such actions, he observed, are skilled, labour-intensive and likely to contribute strongly to local economies. They also contribute to reduction in waste, both of materials and energy. Heritage conservation, he concluded, is the only area of action which brings together the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, cultural and economic.

Professor Walter Santagata (University of Turin, President of the study commission of the Ministry of Cultural Goods on Creativity and the Production of Culture in Italy) spoke on *Creativity and the Production of Culture in Italy*, exploring two models of creativity: creativity for social quality and creativity for innovation. He focussed on recent work concerning the production of new cultural goods, seeking the factors behind creativity and finding these in a combination of cultural (heritage), social and environmental context. This work has led to the creation of a white paper which treats creativity as an input to cultural production, rather than an end in itself.

Mme Erminia Sciacchitano (International Relations, Ministry of Cultural Goods and Cultural Activities, Italy) continued from Professor Santayana’s lead, speaking on the topic of *Creative cities: preservation and production for next generations*, in the particular context of sustainability and the creation of quality, with quality seen not as an optional good but as a central requirement for quality of life. Analogies with the Renaissance concept of “good government” were explored, as were the principles of universal design which underpin both quality and sustainable development. The role of

intercultural dialogue in stimulating creative design and exchanging hard-won experience was highlighted.

Professor Augusto Mateus (former Minister of Economy, Portugal) closed the session, speaking on *A new culture of development*. He examined the relationship between culture, knowledge and creativity, and how these interact in the context of shared heritage. He particularly distinguished value of understanding the stakeholders involved: for culture the citizen, for the cultural industries the customer and for the creative industries the practitioners and patrons.

Dr Fojut closed the proceedings for lunch with a reflection on the interdependent but contrasting concepts of artistic freedom and cultural context.

Theme 2: Heritage and management of change: values for a Europe of diversity and dialogue was introduced by Dr Fojut, who drew attention to the vital role of rights and balancing responsibilities in the negotiation of changing and often competing cultural values, and the importance of using and if necessary adapting existing institutions to provide venues in which such matters can be explored.

Mr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici (President Emeritus of Malta) opened this session with an eloquent exploration of *The human right to the cultural heritage*, reflecting the Faro Convention's contribution to the recognition and safeguarding of this human right. He emphasised the role of the past, both as inspiration and warning, but most of all as the basis for sound decisions and as a starting point for new departures. The importance of personal memory was compared with that of collective memory, and the linear development of the creations of science and technology contrasted with the more culturally-dependent approach of the creative arts.

Mr Bruno Favel (Ministry of Culture, France, and Chair of CDPATEP) described *the role of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP)*, in the context of three key objectives: the protection of diversity, the promotion of dialogue and support for sustainable development. He drew attention particularly to the flexibility of the Faro Convention, which in contrast with earlier heritage conventions does not prescribe forms and standards, but instead encourages adaptable interaction between all key players in society.

Ms Manuela de Melo (Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Committee on Culture, Science and Education) emphasised the importance of promoting the widest possible public appreciation of the Faro principles, by exposing a wide range of heritage issues and encouraging the adoption of the "Faro approach" into everyday life. In this, the role of modern media and communications cannot be over-stated, as agents for promoting a European vision of culture: shared but diverse. Programmes such as the European Museum Awards can focus attention on the issues. Ms de Melo wondered why, if every country seems to feel it is already applying the Faro principles, why are so many slow to sign the Convention? Is this in itself a cultural feature, noting that of the 15 signatories to date, only 5 are from the European Union: more needs to be done to understand what promotes, and what delays, the adoption of instruments such as Faro.

Theme 3: Shared responsibility, partnership and participation: heritage as a factor for democratic involvement was introduced by Dr Fojut, who drew attention to the link to the preceding session. The experience of exploring and negotiating values in the cultural heritage arena, where such negotiations were (fortunately) rarely a matter of “life and death,” could offer a template by which society could develop effective modes of interaction which could then be applied in different, more challenging, spheres.

Mr Luiz Fernando de Almeida (President of the Brazilian Heritage Institute (IPHAM), Brazil) shared with us his perspective on *The Challenges of Management of Cultural Heritage in Brazil Today*. He drew attention to the uneven development of the concept of cultural heritage, essentially along European lines, with little attention paid to the intangible heritage, which had for long been dismissed as “popular culture”. Documentation of heritage has posed serious issues, with official systems sometimes seen as limiting factors. There was, he observed, a widely expressed desire to deal with heritage in a holistic manner, but a reality in which sectoral approaches tended to predominate. Brazil’s situation, he suggested, demonstrated how current approaches to cultural heritage, such as World Heritage listing, were still strongly European-oriented and required rebalancing to reflect more faithfully the full diversity of every country’s population. The Faro Convention, with its strong recognition of the need to preserve and promote diverse heritages, might offer avenues which could be profitably explored by UNESCO in a World Heritage context.

Prof Mikuláš Huba (Institute of Geography, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia) explored examples from Slovakia where *Public participation in cultural heritage management* had made a real *contribution to the development of participatory democracy*. The situation was, he suggested, clearly understood: a broadly-defined cultural heritage can only be saved with an equally widespread public engagement in decision-making and, more importantly, in the practical actions required. In Slovakia, mechanisms for democratic interaction had been developed in conservation situations which were politically unthreatening, such as railway heritage, industrial heritage, traditional wooden buildings. Direct citizen action, locally organised, had given those involved a taste for resolving practical issues independently of state-run funding and control mechanisms. The paper posed questions about how to locate responsibility and leadership within communities, whether geographical or communities of interest, with the state authorities operating in support, rather than command, mode.

Ms Catherine Ledig (Director ADEC, Associate Professor, University of Strasbourg, France) explored the topic of the *Faro Convention and the information society*, demonstrating how the potential of the “information revolution” offered both threats and opportunities in the field of cultural heritage. Not simply new means of communicating messages and material between existing cultural players, or the opportunity to engage with ever-growing international audiences, but a complete shift in the structures and power relationships is required. The potential benefits in terms of access, new forms of cultural activity and new modes of participation – and thus public support, are huge. But to take advantage of these requires awareness of the risks – in particular the risks to underlying “real” heritage conservation posed by the even-increasing focus on “virtual” activity. It also requires new programmes of education and outreach, akin to the rigorous training undergone by hands-on conservators or budding artists. Quality of digital

content, in cultural heritage as elsewhere, is one of the great challenges of the early 21st century.

Prosper Wanner (Place Co-operative, Marseilles and Venice; Co-ordinator “Right to Cultural Heritage” – “40xVenezia”) spoke on two projects, *Marseilles 15/16* and « *40x Venezia* », *examples of heritage communities applying the principles of the Faro Convention*. His examples showed public participation in thought-provoking cultural programmes, centred on heritage assets but exploring the themes of competing values, with an emphasis on rebalancing the national/local deficit in terms of decision-making power over the future of our heritage, and on counteracting the increasing commodification of our historic cities, which can turn them into tourism sites rather than living communities.

Ms Milica Nikolic (Programme Coordinator of Montenegro, RPSEE - The Regional Programme on culture and cultural heritage in South East Europe, Montenegro) described the operation of the Programme, which centred on three strands of action: institutional capacity building, integrated Rehabilitation Project Plan/Survey of Archaeological and Architectural Heritage and Local Development Pilot Projects. The key message is that action on multiple fronts is always necessary: in this case the national and regional institutions, the heritage itself and the local care and delivery mechanisms. Actions need to be interlocking and mutually supportive, and effort in any one area without corresponding consideration of other areas is likely to prove wasted

Finale

The final paper was a light-hearted look into the future. Dag Myklebust (Senior Advisor, Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Norway) adopted the fictitious persona of Mr Portoroz Faro, Minister for Culture of the imaginary state of Transbordania. He transported us 5 years into the future to 27 October 2014. In his presentation, “A peek at the Future” he presented a report to his country’s Cabinet on how Transbordania had progressed rapidly by founding its development squarely upon the principles of Faro. He thanked each of his state’s Cabinet Ministers (represented by the colloquy organisers) for the actions taken in their Ministries to achieve the goal of sustainable development based on the Faro blueprint, mapping out challenges still to be resolved. He closed by calling for the 27th October to be declared Faro Convention Day.

Conclusion

After a short discussion, in which the need not to forget the over-arching role of the planning community in territorial development was emphasised, the moderator offered a short conclusions, identifying key themes which had been present in many of the excellent presentations. In no particular order of priority, Dr Fojut mentioned:

- The need to transform words into actions: Much is already being done which accords with Faro, and needs to be recognised and celebrated. The potential of cultural heritage as a contributor to employment was a constant theme, as was the need to encourage greater rapprochement between players in the fields of conservation and of creativity. There would appear to be a need to concentrate – not to try to achieve everything at once, but to build on existing good practice and

exemplary projects to widen the impact of cultural heritage benefits throughout society.

- Mobilisation: There seems to be a general shortage of strong NGO/public participation in cultural heritage when compared with natural heritage, with more being left to the state authorities. Bearing in mind that revolutions and radical approaches rarely start in central government, how can linkages be made between strong but local activity and often remote regional and national authorities?
- Communication: the value of maintaining and developing skills and qualifications, and of simple sharing knowledge, cannot be over-stated.
- Conservation through creation: several papers emphasised the impossibility, and indeed the lack of necessity, to conserve a “dead” heritage. Only through being seen to underpin human development and improvement in the quality of life – material, social, intellectual, spiritual – can heritage be sustained
- Information: how can we more effectively share what we know, and share our aspirations. How do we at one and the same time communicate with, and educate, the general public so that we understand more fully how we can help create a cultural heritage which is both valued and supported? In the modern world, with so many distractions, how do we address the competition for attention from which we all suffer? How do we achieve democratic participation but retain the principle of proportionality: we do not want to be creating “museums of everything”!

In this context, Dr Fojut concluded, we can learn much from how big business values and uses information: we need to find ways of tracking behaviour of cultural and heritage “consumers”. Why do users of cultural heritage services use them, what do they expect and what do they actually experience. Why do non-users fail to engage with what we describe as cultural heritage – is it lack of awareness, interest, time or financial resources? In short, the cultural heritage observatory function needs to be strengthened, as Faro recommends.

Farewell and thanks

Mr d’ Oliveira Martins closed the proceedings with a short speech and thanked all those who made the day such a success.

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