

THE *HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE* AND ITS MANAGEMENT
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE,
ORGANISED BY THE *BUDAPEST URBAN OBSERVATORY*
Collegium Budapest, 23-25 November 2008

A corpus of standard-setting documents¹, including charters and recommendations, exists on the subject of historic cities and their broader setting, which have been useful to guide policies and practices worldwide, with good results. However, conditions have changed and historic cities are now subject to new development pressures and challenges not present at the time of adoption of the last UNESCO recommendation on urban sites more than thirty years ago, in 1976 (i.e. the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas).

With the current size and foreseen increase of the world's population living in urban areas, supplemented by insufficient policies to recognize and facilitate sustainable use of heritage assets, pressures on historic cities will continue to rise, making the conservation of historic urban areas one of the most daunting tasks of our time: problems range from traffic and tourism pressures, to high-rise constructions and inner-city functional changes.

Since the *Vienna Memorandum* that formed the basis for the 'Declaration on the Conservation of Historic Urban Landscapes', adopted by the 15th General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, discussion has focused on the concept of historic urban landscape. However, certain problems remain to be resolved, notably the difference between cultural landscapes and urban landscapes, the relationships between 'core' and 'buffer zones', the issues of 'authenticity' and 'integrity' in relation to living historic cities, the proper assessments of impacts on Outstanding Universal Value of WH sites in order to better manage urban landscapes.

A certain number of regional meetings have been organised on these issues, such as in Jerusalem (June 2006), in Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation (January, 2007) and in Olinda, Brazil (November 2007). The Budapest conference seeks to contribute to this reflection with particular emphasis on the *management* of historic urban landscapes and on

¹ In particular the 1964 "International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites" (Venice Charter), the 1968 "UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Preservation of Cultural Property endangered by Public or Private works", the 1976 "UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas", the 1982 ICOMOS-IFLA "International Charter for Historic Gardens" (Florence Charter), the 1987 ICOMOS "Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas" (Washington Charter), the 1994 "Nara Document on Authenticity" drafted in occasion of the Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention, as well as the HABITAT II Conference and Agenda 21, which was ratified by Member States in Istanbul (Turkey) in June 1996.

the specificities of the *Central European region*. The aim is to deepen reflexion on these questions and to further refine concepts adapted to local contexts and especially to that of Budapest.

This two-day conference is organised in three major blocks:

1. Reflexions and interdisciplinary perspectives on the very concept of *historic urban landscape* and its relevance for managing changes
2. Comparative perspectives : analysed case studies from cities of the European region
3. Round table on the management of the Budapest World Heritage Site. The management of the *outstanding universal values* of this site deserves special attention not only because twenty years have passed since its inscription on the World Heritage List (1987) but also because of recent problems encountered in managing this site and the current challenges it still faces. Given that the Management Plan of the site is currently under revision, it would be pertinent to gauge the scientific community on this issue and to involve the international experts who participated either in the evaluation of the site before its inscription, or in its monitoring. There have been two reactive monitoring missions: one on the Embankment on the Buda side of the Danube (2005) and another on the Old Jewish Quarter of Pest (2007). The round table would provide an opportunity for local and international experts of various disciplines to focus on current and future management issues of the site.