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EUROMED HERITAGE – Institutional and Legal Framework

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BACKGROUND PAPER

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The aim of this document is to guide the discussions for deliberation and comparison of the situations of inventories in the different countries on the basis of four general themes: 1. present trends, 2. production, 3. processing and communication, 4. uses and users.

Why inventories?

- a fundamental information methodology for all heritage conservation policies,
- the identification of cultural and natural properties is a prerequisite for all actions of preservation, conservation, enhancement and transmission,
- a legal commitment for all States-parties to international conventions.

Objectives

- to collect scientific data in a global, durable, homogeneous documentation that is accessible to everybody,
- to exchange and share this scientific data.

1. Present trends

What new definitions of Cultural Heritage?

Do we agree to consider Heritage as a "present experience" of all the elements, tangible and intangible, that are a legacy from the past (without chronological limitations)? What we are observing is the life of today's society in relation to this Heritage. Therefore, contemporary artistic and handicraft creations (within a thirty-year generation limit), which form part of the loyalty to a living culture while allowing it to develop in accordance with the modern way of life, should be inventoried, as well as ancient buildings and artefacts, that are sometimes relics of past civilisations but continue to give value to the territory.

The field of Cultural Heritage is continuously expanding in its contents and limits and in its interactions with the Natural Heritage.

There is a growing importance of the concepts of the "principle of precaution" and of "preventive actions" in the field of conservation, with the concept of "sensitive areas or architectural assemblages" with a "patrimonial potential" requiring particular attention in

physical planning (delimitation of archaeological areas, special measures for the preservation of certain cultural goods in museums or archives).

There is a need to process sets of new data with changing definition and identification. These inventories are developed in different and numerous frameworks: institutional (government services, local authorities, agencies, various associations), thematic (culture, town planning, education, tourism) and geographical (State, Provinces, Regions, Municipalities).

Therefore, there is a need to know all these inventories and their logical approach, whether formal or not. The inventories of Heritage can no longer be considered independently: partnerships and complementary inventories have to be identified and organised.

What new logical approaches to physical planning?

Heritage is to be taken into consideration as a whole for the success of physical planning operations, since Heritage is a major aspect of the identity of the territory.

What new tools for collecting and processing information?

Documentary information systems, electronic management of documents, geographical information systems, data banks, collections of data. The growing use of these tools in the public services, namely those in charge of the inventories, requires reflection on the coherence of the systems in use: from the collection and processing of the data to the exploitation systems, and to systems of communication and exchange of information.

2. Production

How can one manage the main present objective which is to collect the scientific data in a global, durable and homogeneous documentation system?

A basic global methodology, accepted by all the stakeholders.

The comprehensive inventory is a set of particular inventories developed according to a formal objective, with specific terms of reference.

1. Identification of the heritage collections to be recorded in a similar, coherent way therefore requires definition of the thematic and chronological fields.

2. Definition of clear levels of knowledge, differentiating the types of inventories:

- level 1: minimal record card with identification (simple denomination, location, legal status)
- level 2: detailed description
- level 3: specific or specialised study

3. Definition and methodology of field investigation.

4. Definition and methodology of control and validation of the information.

There is a need to consider the criteria justifying the choice of the services in charge of Heritage, to "patrimonialise" an artefact, a collection, an oral tradition, a site, a monument, at various geographical scales (from local to national) and various levels of responsibility and decision (who takes the decision to "patrimonialise"? the population or the specialised services?)



5. Definition and distinction

- the inventories and the identifications of sensitive collections with an explicit legal status, which require a particular procedure of validation and of control of the data that they contain.
- the inventories chosen for general information, management and knowledge, of which the contents require different basis for validation and control.
(n.b. need to explicit the methodologies of validation and control of the information)

Recording and coordinating the services producing data, which are often decentralised or dependent on different authorities (mainly the territorial authorities).

How to set up or to develop the working tools (computer hardware and software, basic documentary tools: photogrammetry, cartography and environmental data, bibliography, archives, for example)?

How to organise, institutionalise and regulate the tools for the collection and the exchange of data (computer systems, vocabulary, thesaurus, collection of data, saving existing data in other data bases, bibliographic notices, collection of objects, etc...)

- within the services in charge of the Heritage
- in the services of other administrative authorities which also carry out inventories (town planning, environment, etc...)

Identifying and introducing new skills and competences in the services and organising continuous training of the personnel: if the staff of research workers and of curators is generally competent in the Heritage services, the technical staff, in particular at the level of engineers and of specialised technicians, is often weak.

What quality of information? The scientific control of the data has often been favoured, with reason. However, the use of computer systems requires the reference to quality control and technical feasibility, not only of the system as such, but also for the available documents (topographical precision, reference to explicit norms, etc...)

3. Processing and communication.

Data bases and information systems: how to chose?

Strategic options (open vs closed inventory, data processed for outside communication and exchange vs internal use, etc...) lead to technical choices (from the denomination of the entries of recording to the computer software and hardware). The definition of the terms of reference is therefore an essential step.

Definition of communication rules from the free access to the data through an agent of the services acting as a documentation intermediary.

Definition of the degrees of visibility of the data according to the different users (whether the professionals or the general public).

Definition of products for regular output (from the printed material to the web site, to the library of exchangeable data).



4. Users and uses

Which global coherence for the whole system?

An inventory cannot be an aim in itself: the definition of its potential users make possible the identification of the uses that are assigned to the system.

Identification of the partner authorities for the production and/or the exploitation of the data.

Identification of the public concerned by the statutory impact of the inventories (local authorities, town planning, developers, etc...) or simply interested in the information proposed by the inventories (Heritage services, scientific research, tourism, academic circles).

Inventories in relation to preservation norms and regulations: legal role.

Knowledge inventories

- to define the categories of goods requiring a homogeneous management and treatment (collections, museums, monuments, preservation and conservation interventions and preventive measures): internal management in line with the general conservation mission.
- to make the existence of goods known, so that they can be taken into consideration (without the necessity of regulations) in the regional management and help in the decision making process (risk management, physical planning). The idea is to inform.
- for scientific research: the inventories, as the basis of knowledge, must become the reference tools for research.

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Guidelines for the preparation of the "Deliberate Paper" to be prepared by each participant.

- **Personal considerations** concerning the four thematic issues
- **National priorities** identified in the field of Cultural Heritage:
 - priority targets for the inventories (museums, collections, monuments, archaeology, intangible heritage, cultural landscapes...)
 - major economic and social issues in the management of the Heritage
- **Actors** involved in the Conservation policy
 - Government services and agencies, universities,
 - partnership conditions
- **Short history of the inventories** in the country, experimentations and regular services
- **Organisation and financing** of the inventories according to the different services (museums, monuments, archaeology, ethnography, natural sites...)
- **Users** of the inventories

