

Resolution on the principles and practice of the active preservation and rehabilitation of groups and areas of buildings of historical or artistic interest (68/11)

(Adopted by the Ministers' Deputies on 3 May 1968)

The Committee of Ministers,

Having regard to the Recommendation No. 36 (1968) of the Council for Cultural Co-operation on the principles and practice of the active preservation and rehabilitation of groups and areas of buildings of historical or artistic interest;

Bearing in mind:

the opinion put forward by Symposium C, held at Bath from 3 - 7 October 1966;

the basic report presented by the General Rapporteur, Mr. Antony Dale, Chief Investigator of Historic Buildings for England and Wales;

the information given at Symposium C:

- (1) by the lecturers appointed for this purpose;
- (2) by the delegations attending;

Considering, in the first place:

That the groups and areas of historical or artistic interest of European countries are an essential feature of each nation's heritage, and hence have a significance and influence that transcends a local and, in some cases, even a national context;

That the progressive neglect, desertion, degradation or over-population of the historic centres of towns and villages today serves as a pretext for thoughtless destruction in these groups and areas of historical or artistic interest;

That these groups and areas are, moreover, increasingly threatened or even destroyed by the growing pressure of certain features of modern life, such as motor traffic, industrial expansion etc;

That such destruction imperils one of the fundamental and irreplaceable features of our cultural heritage;

That it is essential to reconcile the requirements of urban expansion with the integration of this heritage in a contemporary environment;

That the preservation of these groups and areas of historical or artistic interest must play an important part in securing a better human balance in a civilisation which, being more free from material obligations, should give scope for the fuller development of spiritual forces;

Considering, furthermore:

That the protection of these groups and areas of historical or artistic interest is often beyond the resources of the local authorities responsible;

Considering, finally:

That the protection, preservation and rehabilitation of groups and areas of historical or artistic interest must:

- have as its aim the harmonisation of the old and the modern town,
- help to provide man with a framework and scale appropriate for his way of life;

That the rehabilitation of groups or areas of historical or artistic interest must under no circumstances be divorced from the general plan of development;

That this rehabilitation should also:

- be of educational value,
- be reconcilable with the prospects of cultural tourism,

A. Recommends the governments of member states:

(a) to take urgent steps to adopt special legislation or to adapt existing legislation with a view to preserving the character and general atmosphere of groups and areas of historical or artistic interest and the monuments they contain, and to provide special funds for this purpose;

(b) to ensure genuine co-operation between their responsible departments, local authorities, and voluntary bodies in order to develop, interest and mobilise public opinion;

B. Calls the attention of the governments of member states:

(a) to the need to prepare their development plans in terms of a genuine rehabilitation or a better adaptation of these groups and areas of historical or artistic interest and of the monuments they contain;

(b) to the fact that such rehabilitation or adaptation will constitute an economic investment from both the human and the financial viewpoint;

C. Invites these Governments to draw the attention of those responsible for town and country planning to the need for providing for permanent liaison between preservationists, town planners and economic planners so that when the need for preserving a group or area of historical or artistic interest is recognised, this preservation should be an essential and fundamental consideration in the preparation and implementation of all development plans;

D. Recommends the European Conference of Local Authorities to recommend its members to give full support to the application of the measures defined in paragraph B.

Explanatory note to resolution (68) 11

on the principles and practice of the active preservation and rehabilitation of groups and areas of buildings of historical or artistic interest, adopted at the 170th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (Conclusions, Point XI).

A. BACKGROUND

The Cultural Committee of the Consultative Assembly and in particular its rapporteur, Mr. Ludwig Weiss (Austria), was responsible for initiating a campaign by the Council of Europe in the field of the preservation and enhancement of groups and areas of buildings of historical or artistic interest. A report emphasising the urgency of protective action on a European level was drawn up by this Committee with the assistance of Mr. C. A. Beerli, Professor of Art History at the University of Geneva (Switzerland). The report provided the basis for the adoption of Recommendation 365 by the Consultative Assembly in 1963.

This Recommendation came before the Committee of Ministers who, at the 134th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, decided to ask the Council for Cultural Co-operation to consider the question of conducting a European protection campaign in the context of its programme and with due regard to financial resources.

In order to make this campaign as effective as possible the CCC, in its turn, appointed a Committee of Technical Advisers to co-ordinate the arrangements to be taken in order to arrive at concrete proposals applicable at the national level.

Five symposia were planned. These were attended by senior officials responsible for ancient monuments and leading experts. They provided opportunities on the one hand for exchanging views on theoretical questions and on the other for an appreciation of practical problems. The symposia were from the beginning so designed that each of them would deal with one of the aspects of the general problem.

Explanatory Note to Res. (68) 11

The first two symposia were held respectively at Barcelona (Symposium A, 17 - 19 May 1965) and at Vienna (Symposium B, 4 - 8 October 1965).

The recommendations made by the symposia were adopted by the Council for Cultural Co-operation and embodied in resolutions (66) 19 and 20 of the Committee of Ministers relating respectively to criteria and methods of cataloguing ancient buildings and historical or artistic sites and to finding new uses, their national or aesthetic surroundings, for buildings which are of cultural interest but no longer fulfil their original purpose.

B. SUBSTANCE OF THE RESOLUTION

The third symposium (Symposium C) was held at Bath (United Kingdom) from 3 - 7 October 1966 on the subject "Principles and practice on the active preservation and rehabilitation of groups and areas of buildings of historical or artistic interest". Its purpose was to examine the theoretical and technical problems connected with the assimilation of such groups of buildings into the context of modern life.

The Bath Recommendation was adopted by the Council for Cultural Co-operation at its 13th Session (19-23 February 1968) was endorsed in the form of a resolution by the Committee Ministers at the 170th meeting of the Deputies.

This resolution, which does not involve any direct legislation for member states, makes the following recommendations to their governments:

to take, if necessary, a number of legislative, administrative and financial measures providing for the protection of groups of buildings and areas of historical or artistic interest, with a view to respecting their character and general atmosphere;

to ensure genuine co-operation between the responsible departments, local authorities and voluntary bodies with a view to encouraging an appreciation by the public of the problems involved;

to draw the attention of those responsible for town and country planning to the need for providing for permanent liaison between preservationists, town-planners and economic planners so that, when the need for preserving a group or area of historical or artistic interest is recognised, this preservation should be an essential and fundamental consideration in the
