

Topic 400: Natural and Cultural Heritage: General:

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March 2001

Definition

As described in the Article 1 of the Convention for Protection of Architectural (Granda 1985) and Archaeological (Malta, 1992) Heritage of Europe, cultural heritage includes: 'the monuments, groups of buildings and sites, and elements of archaeological heritage'. The ESDP adopts a wider definition of cultural heritage to include two main dimensions: 'cultural landscapes' and heritage cities, cultural sites and monuments. This distinction was also used in the Study Programme on European Spatial Planning (T620).

Key Issues

A major challenge for integrated spatial strategy development is to link an assessment of cultural heritage and assets to the economic, social and natural environment dimensions of urban region dynamics. The dimension of cultural heritage is not only about what should be preserved from the past. It is also about the specific qualities and traditions of a place, inherited from the past and carried forward into the future. The 'culture' or 'spirit' of a place contributes to shaping its economic, social and political trajectory.

- The need to widen the traditional definition of 'cultural heritage' which is limited to physical and material aspects to include non-physical ones such as traditions, folklores and religions, 'cultural capital', and cultural identity.
- The links between cultural heritage and social cohesion and social exclusion.
- The use of cultural heritage to celebrate diversity and tolerance versus its use as a pretext for ethnic conflicts and violence
- The role of cultural heritage in spatial development, enhancing quality of life, urban regeneration, the locations decision of firms, the creation of job opportunities and tourism.
- The balance between widening access to cultural heritage and its conservation and protection, the 'wise use' of cultural heritage.
- Identifying suitable new uses for historical sites and buildings, authenticity versus 'acceptable' change, preservation versus conservation
- The social and environmental threats to cultural heritage from, for example, new developments, traffic, emissions, vandalism, abandons, mass tourism and lack of investment

ESPRID Short Summary

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- The role of charitable and voluntary organisation in protection of cultural landscape, e.g. National Trust in the UK

Useful follow-up material

Council of Europe's Convention for Protection of Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granda, 1985) and for Protection of Archaeological Heritage of Europe (Malta, 1992)

Other relevant key phrases

territorial milieux.

Other relevant topics

431-433, 450

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