

**18 APRIL 2008 - INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR MONUMENTS**

**SECOND MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF  
CIVVIH- ICOMOS FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN**

**Corfu 18 and 19 April**

**AND THE SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM**

*"Modern challenges for the historical cities of Mediterranean.  
The Vienna Memorandum, what future? Actual questions about the Charter of the  
Historical Cities "*

Following the entry of the historical city of Corfu in UNESCO's World Heritage List, it was decided to host there the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Subcommittee of CIVVIH-ICOMOS for the Mediterranean which was set up on the Greek ICOMOS initiative under the aegis of the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE) in 2006 with its headquarters in Patras.

The event was dedicated to the International Day for Monuments established by UNESCO for the 18<sup>th</sup> of April.

The goal of the meeting was to highlight the contemporary problems of Mediterranean historical cities and methods to address them while at the same time illustrating the Historical City of Corfu.

The meeting was organized by:

- The International Scientific Committee for Historical Towns and Villages  
CIVVIH-ICOMOS
- The Greek section of ICOMOS
- The Technical Chamber of Greece-Corfu Section
- The Technical Chamber of Greece-Western Greece Section

The topic of the Scientific Symposium was the current scientific discussion on broad-scale interventions carried out in historical cities today. These interventions are many and varying and have significant implications for the economic and social organization, the functions, the buildings and the architecture of man-made or non-natural landscapes of historical cities.

This reflexion is of interest to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre which issued a document of principle known as the Vienna Memorandum, adopted in 2005 in Vienna, and the subject of ongoing discussions in ICOMOS.

It is also the basis of the dialogue started in the context of the International Scientific Committee for Historical Towns CIVVIH- ICOMOS in accordance with the 2005 Constantinople decision to update the International Charter for the safeguard of the Historical Cities, also known as the Charter of Washington - 1987 (Adopted by the General Assembly of the ICOMOS – Washington D.C., October 1987).

The meeting which brought together, in addition to CIVVIH members, many architects and engineers from Corfu, was attended and heralded with messages from:

- the Greek Socialist Party (PASOK) MP for Corfu, Mrs. Angela Gerekou, Architect – Engineer,

- the President of the Technical Chamber of Greece-Corfu Section, M. Nikos Spiggos and the Vice-President M. Nikolaos Triantos, Electrical Engineer,
- the General Secretary of the prefectural self-government of Corfu, M. Kostas Karvounis,
- the Mayor of Corfu, M. I. Michalev and the Deputy Mayor, M. Ioannis Mamalos.

The agenda of the Scientific Symposium was divided in three sections:

**The first** on the city of Corfu.

**The second** on other cases of Mediterranean cities.

**The third** on wider issues and directions for addressing the problems.

In particular:

The first section provided the opportunity to present the particular cultural characteristics of the city of Corfu that led to its inscription in UNESCO's World Heritage List and the related problems of protection (*papers by Metropia and Colletta*). Presented also was the management plan which was drawn up for Corfu's candidature.

The presentations of the second section on other Mediterranean cities demonstrated the multicultural character of the historical cities of the Mediterranean and their common problems as follows:

- Traffic problems, usually hard to tackle, with efforts often having an adverse impact (*e.g. Istanbul, vieux Damas*).
- Problems arising from the uncontrolled development of tourism which alters both the operation of historical cities as well as their form (*Marrakech, vieux Damas, Istanbul, Spanish and Greek cities*). The examples presented also suggested that tourism represents perhaps the greatest challenge for the future of coastal Mediterranean cities. It should be addressed with determination, if the alterations it may cause to the particular nature of these cities are to be avoided.
- The construction of new buildings incompatible with the established scale of the city as well as the introduction of new uses and structures within historical centres or at their borders which disrupt the scale of the adjacent built environment (*examples of*

*Spanish cities, the museum of the Acropolis of Athens, vieux Damas, Edirne*) by not taking into account the character of the surroundings – natural or built.

- Regeneration projects eliminating old town sections or the renewal of public spaces often leading to their “homogenization” and the loss of the particular character of each region (*examples of Greek, Spanish cities*).
- Building activity in areas outside the limits of the master plan which alters the environment and does not respect the procedure of master plan extension nor the archaeological sites.
- Problems of shortage of resources for maintenance and restoration works and more specific problems arising from climate, the vicinity of the sea, sandstorms (*Rosetta*), etc.
- Lack of infrastructure (grids, waste, etc.).

The papers of the third section focused on more theoretical debates on the notion and identity of historical cities as against other terms recently discussed on the international level (e.g. historical urban landscapes, ecological city, etc.) Positive experiences from restoration projects were presented and basic questions were raised on the transformations of historical cities as food for thought.

Participants in the proceedings of the Symposium included ICOMOS and TEE members from the city of Patras (which was appointed as the Sub-committee’s headquarters in its first meeting on March 2006) under the guidance of the architect and member of the Governing Committee of Western Greece Section, M. Iannis Pantazopoulos.

The representatives of Patras handed to the Subcommittee the volume of the proceedings of the 2006 Symposium which is at the disposal of the members of all CIVVIH-ICMOM’s committees, the members of TEE and all interested parties.

They also announced the compilation of a study with the support of the Department of Information Technology of the University of Patras on: *A system for the recording association, identification and imaging of cultural resources with the use of GIS in the World Wide Web environment*. The aim of this study is to embed the Subcommittee in the Internet.

Finally, they announced that the TEE-Western Greece Section in collaboration with the Institute of Information Technology of the University of Patras is considering to include proposals of the Subcommittee in INTERREG IV projects to enhance the cooperation for the protection and safeguarding of the historical cities of the Mediterranean in order to promote the research interests of the Subcommittee and communication and cooperation between its members.

In conclusion, the Scientific Symposium and the meeting of the Subcommittee of the CIVVIH for the Mediterranean adopted the following proposals and decisions:

- Need to define acceptable interventions in historical cities; PROTECTION PROJECTS, MANAGEMENT PLANS and ONGOING MONITORING of the development of historical cities; need to involve the local population (*Ray Bondin*).
- Need for more in-depth research on how to address the problems of the historical cities of the Mediterranean. For this purpose, Gomez Ferrer Bayo suggested to draw up an Inventory of Historical Cities of the Mediterranean (*Inventaire des villes historiques de Mediterranee*). This proposal echoes the suggestion of the team of the Greek ICOMOS in 2006 at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Subcommittee in Patras to set up a common Database for the historical cities of the Mediterranean identifying their characteristics and problems.
- Need to update the 1987 Charter of Historical Cities to adapt it in the context of contemporary data and to highlight the notion of “*historical city*” at a time when several other terms emerge in international maps (e.g. historical urban landscape, the city as an ecosystem, etc.).

The proposals of E. Petroncelli and Gomez Ferrer Bayo to supplement the 1987 Charter which they prepared under the project they were assigned at the last meeting of CIVVIH in 2007 in Helsinki were also discussed.

Finally, Mrs. Sofia Avgerinou-Colonia and Mrs. E. Maistrou proposed to hold a working meeting in Athens in 2008 to discuss exclusively the updating of the Charter.

- The President of the CIVVIH, Ray Bondin, offered Corfu partners the possibility of direct communication with the experts-members of CIVVIH to seek advice on problems they may encounter with respect to planning and management in their city.

In the end, the following resolutions were tabled and approved:

- By Michel Van Der Meerschen against the ongoing destructions of the built or not built historical space of Medina of Marrakech and building hotel complexes.
- By Samir Abdulac on the need to adopt a buffer zone (*zone tampon*) to protect Vieux Damas from the traffic regulations advertised there,
- According the proposal of Teresa Colletta approved by the members of the committee, a denunciation against the approval by the Central Archaeological Council and the Greek Ministry for Culture of the request of the Port Organization of Corfu to construct a floating parking lot in the old harbour especially as the city was declared a “city of world heritage” and at the same time is totally deprived of public transport. The Technical Chamber of Greece action which would help to relieve traffic and serve the citizens.
- By the members of the committee against the prospect to tear down historical buildings in front of the new Athens Acropolis Museum.