

OPENING

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I believe that we would all wish to view the Mediterranean as a region governed by peace, stability and safety, where the respect for human rights is guaranteed and intercultural dialogue is conducted freely.

Mediterranean countries are linked not only by geographic, but also by primitive cultural and historic ties, which can form a propitious framework for rapprochement and cooperation between peoples, in order to face the problems of interstate relations devised by former generations.

These ties form equally propitious presuppositions, encouraging the tackling of new problems having risen in the Mediterranean because of globalization conditions,

- migration,
- climate change
- uncontrollable tourism
- and the degradation of the natural and cultural environment.

Over the last years, these problems have been aggravated because of the deep financial crisis in the countries of the European south and by instability and conflicts in Arab countries. However, these countries are able to produce optimistic economic data in the present and in their future, given that they dispose important resources rendering them important and attractive destinations for investments. Through targeted developmental initiatives, contributing substantially to the development of local economies, but also through a more reinforced cooperation in the fields of culture and education, we will bring the peoples of the Mediterranean closer.

Mediterranean civilizations have highlighted and maintained the stability of the values for the respect of human values and rights, for the cultural heritage of humanity and the natural environment. We therefore believe that they can continue to loyally serve these values and to create a common future of peace, democracy, prosperity and social and cultural understanding.

The participants in today's meeting can actively contribute within this framework.

The participation in this meeting is not accidental:

Turkey, Greece, Egypt, Tunisia, Israel, Italy, France, Portugal

Even China and Poland are represented.

Malta, Spain and Belgium sent their greetings.

We form a circle of friendship and scientific cooperation of ICOMOS on matters pertaining to historic cities.

Eight years ago, we founded the Mediterranean sub-committee of the International Scientific Committee on Historic Cities CIVVIH-ICOMOS at the city of Patras in Greece, within the spirit of Euromediterranean collaboration,

The diversity of these important Mediterranean civilizations has yielded a rich heritage, and many properties of this heritage have been included in the UNESCO list of world heritage.

Our cities have a prominent place among them.

We aspire at strengthening the cooperation on the protection and preservation of the historic cities in the Mediterranean.

The common perils we are facing be it natural, as earthquakes, floods and fires, the intensive urban development or tourist pressure, the result of economic crisis and lately the political conflicts impose the need for cooperation and for joint programs in order to protect our historic cities.

To this day, five scientific meetings have taken place to tackle these issues. Two in Greece (Patras, Corfu), two in Turkey (Edirne and Izmir) and one in Cyprus (Nicosia).

Our sixth meeting takes place today in the historic city of Alanya.

At a region inhabited from the prehistoric era

Where different cultures have met over the passing of the centuries, leaving traces which we admire and are obliged to rescue.

This is the region and the historic city of Alanya which, is charged with the memories of the meeting that took place here, among the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean. Greeks,Phenicians, Romans,Byzantines,

Seljuk Turks,Crusaders

As Greek a I am particularly touched to be here, because this region has been one of the sites of Hellenic civilization.

We belong among those believing in the historic need to achieve a strong and permanent friendship and cooperation between Mediterranean peoples.

I believe that the cornerstone for the building of this friendship is the mutual respect for each people's great values, like its historic, cultural and religious values.

I strongly believe that this Mediterranean meeting further strengthens the cooperation between the Mediterranean National Committees of ICOMOS but especially brings the optimistic message of rapprochement and friendship

among the Mediterranean peoples , through the common goal for the protection of their common cultural heritage!

Our meeting here at Alanya on the subject of :

“Mediterranean Fortified Port Cities of 21th century : Sites, values and genius loci”

is of particular importance, as it aspires to highlight the characteristic features of tangible and intangible heritage which formulate the unique and prominent value of the fortified port cities of the Mediterranean, as well as to bring to light the challenges emerging in the threshold of the 21st century, in regard to their protection.

Our subject it relates also to impact from the large-scale interventions and the mega-constructions imposed by the conditions of modern-day globalized economy and by developing tourism, thus threatening historic urban landscapes.

This issue has concerned the CIVVIH and our thinking is reflected in the Valetta Principles. Among the basic principles for the effectiveness of protection mentioned in our document is the rational and hierarchical planification for the protection of a historic city aiming at its viability, as well as the need for cooperation with local societies in order to reach that goal.

The timeliness of our suggestions is renewed, as thus year we are celebrating 50 years from the Venice charter, and 20 years from the Nara document on authenticity which are the theoretical basis of ICOMOS, which we will have the opportunity to discuss during our 18th general assembly in Florence next November.

The special message, which should emanate from today’s meeting, concerns among others the documentation of historicity for the Mediterranean fortified port cities.

After Braudel, and the historians that followed, we are also ascertaining as experts on the Mediterranean fortified port cities protection and design that this is a group of cities belonging to a special unified geographical and historic region.

There exist close kinships as well as considerable particularities. It would therefore not be an exaggeration to state that this is a series of cases constituting the unique urban heritage of the Mediterranean. This heritage is formed by the succession of historic typologies which are still under investigation. Our sub-committee must contribute to this investigation, by studying the case of Alanya.

This is a fortified port city which, in my opinion, disposes particular and special elements of tangible and intangible heritage, complementing the historic urban typology of the Mediterranean in a unique manner.

Alongside other international organizations aiming to protect heritage, our sub-committee:

- must bring forth these questions
- It must highlight key subjects
- Respond to modern challenges
- and form the necessary scientific practices and synergies so that the heritage of Alanya can receive the national and international recognition that it deserves, as a single case, as well as an element of a particular type of cities, a group of cases characterizing the eastern Mediterranean.

This ascertainment is particularly important, because even though this is one of the ancient sites , the international community owes to deepen in its knowledge of Alanya.

Being a cultural organism, ICOMOS and CIVVIH has the high duty to show extroversion and creativity and to construct a solid cooperation for the protection of this common heritage.

I would like to congratulate and thank ICOMOS Turkey as well as the local authorities for supporting the organizing of this meeting.

I would also like to express my deep emotion and welcome all colleagues who responded to our invitation for this meeting.

Let us open the horizons of our thinking towards knowledge and the hope for a viable future, travelling with Greek poet born in Istanbul and lived in Alexandria, Egypt Konstantinos Kavafis through his poem:

Ithaca

When you set out for Ithaca
ask that your way be long,
At many a Summer dawn to enter
with what gratitude, what joy -
ports seen for the first time;
to stop at Phoenician trading centres,
and to buy good merchandise,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
and sensuous perfumes of every kind,
sensuous perfumes as lavishly as you can;
to visit many Egyptian cities,
to gather stores of knowledge from the learned.

Constantine P. Cavafy