

3. *THE VALLETTA PRINCIPLES: THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION, THE STRENGTHS AND THE CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVES*

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This work focuses the attention on the Valletta Principles with the double aim of:

- 1) highlighting the innovative concepts and the different approach the Principles detain if compared with other International Charter and
- 2) comparing its contents with the changes and the new phenomena affecting nowadays the city and historic centres. It intends to provide a contribution to the theme of the symposium on lessons learned and new challenges in the practical implementation of the Valletta Principles.

The communication proposed starts from the storytelling of the long building process, about 6 years of Valletta Principles document: from the intention to simply update the Washington Charter to the progressive awareness of the need for a new document built through a continuous process of shared construction / revision, involving all the ICOMOS members.

This brief overview will allow to focus the attention on the new approach and themes introduced, deepening in detail the acknowledgement of the crucial role of intangible values and the identity of places in the conservation and safeguard of historical cities, that is, perhaps, one of the most important novelties of the document. In fact, the Washington Charter considered the city made up of places and spatial relationships between them, i.e. a physical city made of spaces and inhabitants, without mentioning the intangible values that constitute the real essence of the relationship between people and spaces. The consequences for historical cities which are implicit in this introduction of new concepts and new values will be extensively discussed.

The end of the presentation will be focused on the changes that have taken place during the last 11 years, highlighting the new questions posed to the interventions on historic centres. We are in the middle of a systemic crisis that involves economy, society, environment and geopolitical balances. A crisis of growth, social cohesion, and cognitive paradigms due to the convergence of several phenomena breaking traditional models and frameworks:

- Climate Change and the general environmental downfall;
- the crisis of geopolitical order that came out from the II World War;
- the end of the infinite economic growth model and the failure of Globalization evidenced by recent pandemic and the present war;
- the new important role that Culture plays in economic regeneration projects of many cities;
- a new structure of western society struggling among an advanced ageing process, great immigration waves and the implosion of parental structures.

These phenomena urgently highlight new instances that could be translated into new demands for urban space: spaces for rebalancing ecological processes, spaces for equity and inclusion, spaces for cultural contamination and spaces where new economies could be contextualized. The implications of these demand for historic cities must be considered.