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The historic city, a reference model for urban sustainable development policies

Perspectives for the historic centre of Athens

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Change in the traditional uses and withdrawal of traditional occupations
Conflicts of use and withdrawal of the habitat
Socio-demographic concerns

• The change in the social composition of the central areas in Athens during the last 20 years is connected with two important phenomena:
  • the pre-urbanization suburbanization (from the ‘70s)
  • and the influx and installation of immigrants (from the ‘90s)
From urban concentration to the departure of residents from the centre and the installation of immigrants

1. 250,000 INHABITANTS 1950-70
2. 1965-80 DENSIFICATION
3. SUBURBANISATION 1975-
Expansion from the centre towards the northeast and southeast suburbs
The social map of Athens area 2010

High income strata

Middle income strata

Low income strata
Change of the functional role of the Athens center

30% of Small – Medium Enterprises

1994: 1300 crafts
2010: 300 crafts

3-4% use habitat, 200 000 immigrants

500 unused buildings

3-4°C Temperature higher than the suburbs

Densification of restaurants and bars
Neglected building potential

- An important depreciation of the building reserve
- The phenomenon of gentrification
- New housing models, corresponding to new lifestyles and new forms
The historicity and its contribution to a sustainable perspective for the historic centre of Athens

Residents
Competent bodies
local government
Specialists

are now realizing that
a new approach is needed
The major problems from the residents’ point of view are the:

- Traffic
- Parking
- Noise and atmospheric pollution
- Lack of green spaces
The main advantages from the residents’ point of view are the:

- area’s central character
- easy access to public services and bodies
- commercial stores and recreational areas
From the point of view of the state and the local government

The Athens Master Plan N.1515/1985

- recognizes and delimitates legislatively the *Athens’s historic centre*
- acknowledges the *historicity of the city*
Interventions concerning the

• Protection of the historic district of Plaka,
• Listing of the historic buildings of the centre
• Unification of archaeological sites,
• Works for the Olympic Games of 2004
The sustainable protection and management of the Athens historic centre through the *recovery of territorial cohesion* becomes a basic target for the Athenian historic centre.
Factors of a sustainable change.

• Promotion and connection of the historically important sites, so as to complete the Athens “walk” and “archaeological park”
• Encouragement for the return of residences,
• Protection, revitalization and promotion of certain traditional professions with modern terms
• Social policies dealing with criminality and welcoming immigrants
For the specialists there are three in severable dimensions

- the **architectural**
- the **urban-planning**
- the **environmental dimension**
Athens walk and archaeological park
The documentation of historicity and the recording of important facts which should be preserved in order to be bequeathed to future generations, within the context of a sustainable urban development, are recognized as a particular and important factor of development.