

Dear CIVVIH Colleagues,
Dear participants,

On behalf of CIVVIH I would like to thank Walter Rossa for the initiative of inviting us to Coimbra, and to thank the University of Coimbra for its organisation and support of the meeting, in particular Luisa Trindade.

It is a great pleasure and honour to welcome you here in Coimbra, in Portugal my homeland.

In 2019, in Tunis, the CIVVIH decided to update the approaches and considerations developed in the Valletta Principles, to define the new challenges and incorporate significant evolutions in the definitions and the methodologies in the matter of safeguarding and managing historical towns and urban areas.

A working group was formed under the leadership of Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonia and Álvaro Gómez-Ferrer Bayo.

In our days, the world is changing at an unprecedented speed. These changes concern human settlements generally, and historic towns and urban landscapes in particular. Cities contain most of the world's population and are the centre of the world economy, leading the evolution of humanity.

The world is challenged (?) by so many significant and fast-growing threats to people and their cultural heritage worldwide. We are facing an ecological, economic, and social crisis that is now manifesting itself on a global scale. As well as global warming, scarcity of natural resources, gaps between developed and developing countries, deforestation and drastic loss of biodiversity, natural and industrial disasters, there is also global population growth, broad population displacement, conflicts, and wars.

The original intention was to revise the Valletta Principles, recognizing its strengths and weaknesses in a way to gain a better understanding of its content and identify aspects that need to be improved.

In the light of all the new paradigms, the CIVVIH has now decided to start a new document. This new document needs to develop guidance for the various management systems, taking into account environmental issues and sustainable development, in the knowledge that in many countries planning strategies, policies and regulations are different and sometimes unclear.

The conclusions of the Brussels meeting also bring forward the need of new recommendations and a cross-cutting approach to the core issues facing current urban development and governance, as well as the challenges when addressing protected or historic settlements.

To succeed and to face present and future crises, we need to adapt and readjust our current methodologies. We need to improve approaches in the management and planning for the historic environment.

CIVVIH plays an essential role in the search for better understanding the historic urban process and the capacity of cities to respond to the growing complexity of today's social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Developing this new document has taken a long journey, we greatly appreciate Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonia's and Alvaro Gomez Ferrer Bayo's courage and persistent professional effort to lead the process to its current stage.

The program of this day will start with a

1. Presentation of the text "The Historic City Project" proposed by Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonias and Álvaro Gómez-Ferrer Bayo to complement the Valletta Principles.

Then we continue with an

2. Open exchange to gather first general opinions and to raise particular topics, each speaker being allocated 5-6 minutes in time.

Coffee break

1. Critical discussion and debate organised in two groups (French-speaking and English-speaking) to study the strengths and weaknesses of the text, with the appointment of a rapporteur to summarise the proposals being considered.

Lunch break

2. Critical discussion and debate organised in two groups (French-speaking and English-speaking) to study the strengths and weaknesses of the text, with the appointment of a rapporteur to summarise the proposals being considered.

Plenary meeting and final discussion with drafting of a summary note.

Before we start, I would like to ask for two volunteers to take notes for the report of this meeting.

I am sure that this meeting will nourish considered reflections in order to move forward with a proposal for a new document.

I wish you all a productive dialogue in Coimbra.

Thank you very much for your attention!

Paula Cordeiro
CIVVIH president

June 19th, 2023

