

ICOMOS
International Scientific Committee on Historic Towns and Villages (CIVVIH)
Annual Meeting
September 12, 2025
In person meeting

Members Present:

Alicia Leonor Cahn	ARGENTINA
Robyn Christie	AUSTRALIA
Carmen Azevedo	BELGIUM
Paula Cordeiro	BELGIUM
Elena Dimitrova	BULGARIA
Riin Alatalu	ESTONIA
Antoine Bruguerolle	FRANCE
Christian Martin	FRANCE
Dominique Cassaz	FRANCE
Claus-Peter Echter	GERMANY
Matthias Ripp	GERMANY
Elina Angelis	GREECE
Eleni Maistrou	GREECE
Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonia	GREECE
Yorgos Kourmadas	GREECE
Yuichi Fukukawa	JAPAN
Hae Un Rii	KOREA
Jana Jakobsone	LATVIA
Siame Hanna Ishac	LIBAN
Ai Tee Goh	MALAYSIA
Hogne Langset	NORWAY
Shadi Ghadban	PALESTINE
Danuta Klosek-Kozlowska	POLAND
Juan A. García Esparza	SPAIN
Ganna Arzili	SWEDEN
Pål Anders Stensson	SWEDEN
Elif Mihcioglu	TURKEY
Ege Uluca Tümer	TURKEY
Nuran Zeren Gülersoy	TURKEY
Torsten Haak	U.K.
Kathleen Crowther	USA

- 1) Approval of the Agenda.
- 2) President's report - Paula Cordeiro:

2.1. Update on membership; new members (Executive).

Presentation of the Bureau and Executive teams for the period 2024-2027. After the elections, and to guarantee the representation of all world regions, the Bureau co-opted 4 more members:

Alfredo CONTI (Argentina)
Jigna DESAI (India)
Soehardi Hartono (Indonesia)
Nuran Zeren GÜLERSOY (Turkey)

2.2. Previous meetings

Several bureau and executive meetings have been held online since the set-up of the new team: October 18th, 2024; December 13th, 2024; January 24th, 2025; March 21st, 2025; May 16th, 2025; July 7th, 2025.

The Annual Meeting and Scientific Symposium took place in Sinasos, Cappadocia, Turkey, on September 5-8, 2024. The symposium on *Climate Change in Historic Towns and Villages of the Mediterranean Area* was prepared by the Mediterranean Sub-Committee of CIVVIH.

There were 21 presentations about different themes and insights:

- Urban Ecology as a Multifaceted Strategy
- Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment
- Bioclimatic Architecture & Urban Ecological Approaches
- Integration into Planning Policy
- Risk Prevention & Management Plans
- Rehabilitation & Adaptation
- A Holistic, Interdisciplinary Vision

CIVVIH attend the GA ICOMOS 2024 in Ouro Preto, Brazil, on November 10-15, 2024.

Several members were present: Antoine Bruguerolle, Alicia Leonor Cahn, Paula Cordeiro and Hanna Ishac. CIVVIH was also invited to attend the ISCCCL Scientific Symposium and Field Visits on November 9-10, 2024, in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. During this meeting, CIVVIH presented the ongoing work on updating the Valletta principles and moving on toward a new document. At the Adcom meeting, CIVVIH announced the production of a new document. During the scientific symposium, Paula and Antoine presented the contribution *Historic Urban Landscapes Facing the Challenges of a Changing World*, on November 14, 2024.

The Ouro Preto meeting was also an opportunity to meet our colleagues from the region and discuss the reactivation of the Ibero-American Subcommittee. There were 20 in-person participants and 11 online attendees. Elections for this subcommittee are foreseen in the near future. Ángela Rojas, Javier Aguilera Rojas, Victor Fernández Salinas and Cristóbal Vallhonrat oversee the reactivation.

2.3. CIVVIH subcommittees

Presentation of the presidents of the subcommittees and the corresponding contact person within the CIVVIH Bureau and Executive.

Asia-Pacific: Zhang Jie (China) 2018; Soehardi Hartono (Indonesia),

Central and Eastern Europe: Danuta Klosek-Kozlowska 2016-2025; Elena Dimitrova (Bulgaria),

Ibero-American: (pending elections); Alfredo Conti (Argentina),

Mediterranean: Faïka Béjaoui (Tunisia) 2024; Antoine Bruguerolle (France).

2.4. Update on membership; new members.

CIVVIH currently has 105 Expert members, 20 Associate members, and 17 Honorary members. The countries participating are 55, 7 in Africa, 9 in America, 15 in Asia, 23 in Europe and 1 in Oceania. The contact persons to become a member are Paula Cordeiro and Juan A. García-Esparza. All the information is available on the website: Members – ICOMOS CIVVIH.

Announcement of the new 2025 expert and associate members

New expert members are:

- 1 Carmen Azevedo BELGIUM
- 2 Catherine Madoni FRANCE
- 3 Elina Angeli GREECE
- 4 Yorgos Kourmadas GREECE
- 5 Uri Padan ISRAEL
- 6 Ganna Arzili SWEDEN

New associate members are:

- 1 Zikui Xia CHINA
- 2 Tamer ElSerafi EGYPT
- 3 Mohammad Mahdaviaashraf IRAQ
- 4 Natalia Makovetskaya NORWAY
- 5 Didem Boyacioglu TURKEY

There was a minute of silence in remembrance of those members who recently passed away:

Prof. Dr Yuksel Dincer (1956 -2024) Icomos Turkey; 16.09.2024,
Ms. Ma. Rosa Suárez Inclán Ducassi (1997-2015) Icomos Spain; 5.10.2024,
Ing. Vlastislav Ouroda, Icomos-Czechia; 21.12.2024.

2.5. Collaboration with UNESCO – ICOMOS - OWHC

2.5.1. Each year, CIVVIH experts participate in the evaluation of World Heritage nominations, providing highly professional assessments:

Desk Reviews:

- Waldsiedlung Zehlendorf - Extension of the WHS "Berlin Modernism Housing Estates", Germany
- Huichol Route Through the Sacred Sites to Huiricuta (Tatehuari Huajuye), Mexico
- City of York: Historic Urban Core, UK
- City of Gdynia, Poland

Tentative List:

- The Historical Port City of Izmir, Turkey
- The Monasteries of Tatev and Tatevi Anapat and the Adjacent Areas of the Vorontan Valley, Armenia

Field Missions:

WHC-ICOMOS-ICCROM Reactive Monitoring Mission To Budapest.

2.5.2. ICOMOS Working Groups.

Participation as ICOMOS representatives:

- World Urban Forum (WUF), UN-Habitat: Claus-Peter Echter
- Habitat Professionals Forum (HPF): Hanna Ishac (since April 2025, replacing Eric Huybrechts)

Working groups:

- Sustainable Development Goals Working Group (SDWG): Claus-Peter Echter
- Development of ICOMOS Guiding Principles for Protecting our Cultural Heritage from Damage and Loss Caused by Fire: Faïka Béjaoui and Matiyas Fantaye
- Heritopolis (global research network initiated by UN-Habitat): Steering Committee: Claus-Peter Echter

The President reminds members that it is important to improve the visibility and increase the representation of CIVVIH in working groups and conferences.

Just to clarify:

- Working groups: A member is officially appointed to represent CIVVIH.
- Conferences: A member must be mandated by the President or the Bureau.

The President thanked members for their ongoing contributions; 22 members responded to the latest call for activity reports.

The President remembers that the last issue of the CIVVIH newsletter was published on October 28, 2020, and raised the question of whether it should be revived and redesigned in a new format that is more effective and engaging.

CIVVIH maintain a website and a Facebook site with 1.600 members. The Facebook page is managed by Claus-Peter Echter.

2.6. Organisation of World Heritage Cities (OWCH)

CIVVIH was invited to participate in the 17th World Congress of the OWHC. Paula Cordeiro presented the CIVVIH works, and Antoine Bruguerolle represented the CIVVIH in the *Symposium on Habitability of Historic Centres*. During the workshop: *Requalify the Habitat* (Focusing on the critical role of residents, revitalisation beyond façade restoration, and the creation of inclusive spaces where historical identity enriches community life).

3) Exchange and Discussion:

Topic 1. Facebook community and website:

Claus-Peter offered to step aside for a new person to take over management of the Facebook group.

Carmen Azevedo asks whether CIVVIH is present on Instagram; currently, it is not.

Claus-Peter explains the conditions for people to join the Facebook group with questions such as: what is your interest in joining this group, and what is your expertise in urban conservation or in cities and villages? The site has moderators who finally accept people or not. Concerns raised:

- The newsletter format is outdated and should be modernised; communication must be more open and efficient.
- The possibility of a members-only area (as in ICOMOS Belgium) was discussed, but its feasibility is uncertain due to technical and staffing requirements.

Website discussion:

- Kathleen explained that the website, created 4–5 years ago, functions as a static information repository due to a lack of permanent staff.
- CIVVIH is transitioning website management; Alfredo Conti may recruit a student to act as editor.
- Questions raised: Will members use a new website? Who will maintain it? Should it include a member-only section and/or e-news?
- Someone suggested coordinating with other scientific committees to express shared digital needs so ICOMOS HQ could develop a unified system.

The board members have tried to find someone to help. And they had a proposal from Alfredo Conti to contact the students to be able to manage the website. We are still waiting for an answer. It would be better if it were a CIVVIH member or a young CIVVIH member who wants to take this into account.

Conclusion:

- Carmen volunteered for Facebook and Instagram.
- For the website: CIVVIH will contact other subcommittees to examine their systems; Kathleen will follow up with other scientific committees.
- We await confirmation from Alfredo on the technical appointment.

Additional communication proposal:

- Members currently submit only annual reports, seen as insufficient.
- Proposal to request reports **every six months** and produce a newsletter like the successful Australian ICOMOS model. The Australia ICOMOS model is a fortnightly e-news to Australian ICOMOS members.
- Volunteers will be required for this work.

Topic 2. Subcommittee for Central and Eastern Europe.

Danuta Klosek-Kozlowska, the current president, proposes renaming the subcommittee to include **Northern Europe**, given the participation of members from that region and shared connections through the Baltic Sea.

The subcommittee has organised past meetings in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland.

A leadership transition is necessary as the current mandate of Danuta ends. There are concerns about how merging Northern Europe with this group might affect the original subcommittee structure.

Topic 3. ICOMOS works in Ukraine.

Riin Alatalu reported that ICOMOS has been actively involved since the beginning of the war, but efforts to support Ukraine suffer from poor coordination and overlapping initiatives. A flexible internal forum was created to share information across committees. Several missions have been carried out, including risk assessments, 3D modelling, and rehabilitation planning for cities and wooden churches. Challenges include adapting projects to Ukrainian legal frameworks and ensuring local collaboration. Encouragingly, ICOMOS Ukraine has become more active and is now a partner in projects. Members are invited to participate in future reconstruction efforts once conditions allow. Agreement to formalise participation in Ukraine-related projects and to continue discussions on committee restructuring and leadership succession.

Topic 4. Collaborations and opportunities.

The discussion focused on future collaboration between heritage organisations (CIVVIH, ICOMOS, UNESCO, OVPM, etc.) and cities.

Shifting collaboration models: Partnerships are moving away from open scientific exchanges toward mayor-led initiatives, making it less clear where CIVVIH fits.

Challenges with OVPM: Previously, CIVVIH and experts provided scientific input directly and participated in the jury of the Jean-Paul-L'Allier Prize. CIVVIH is now present as an observer, not a scientific partner.

Emerging opportunities: New initiatives include the “Heritage Forces” group, work on updating heritage documents to address contemporary issues like energy efficiency, thematic roundtables and resilience-related initiatives (Germany, Italy).

Topic 5. ICOMOS General Assembly 2026 (Malaysia):

Presentation by Ai Tee Goh

Will be held in Kuching, Sarawak, with the theme *Living Heritage: Respect, Enhance, Accept, Partnership (REAP)*.

Malaysia, a relatively new ICOMOS member, aims to showcase multi-ethnic heritage, both tangible and intangible.

The program will include academic papers, UNESCO-linked public events (e.g., indigenous heritage, gastronomy, youth programs), masterclasses, and heritage impact workshops.

The GA will also align with ICOMOS's 3-year plan on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

Asia-Pacific Subcommittee: Plans are underway to schedule a regional CIVVIH/AP meeting alongside or before the GA in Malaysia to strengthen regional cooperation.

Overall, the key themes are: navigating reduced influence in traditional collaborations, identifying new opportunities (urban resilience, UNESCO partnerships, indigenous heritage), and preparing for an inclusive GA in Malaysia in 2026.

CIVVIH has been invited to chair a session during the scientific symposium in Malaysia. The Bureau has accepted this invitation.

4) New CIVVIH Document

This session focused on progress toward drafting a **new international document for CIVVIH/ICOMOS**.

Background:

Discussions began in 2019 (Tunisia) with the idea of updating principles, but this evolved into creating a completely new document.

- A first working group (led by [Sofia AVGERINOU-KOLONIAS](#) and [Álvaro GÓMEZ-FERRER BAYO](#)) developed an initial draft after meetings in 2022 (Coimbra) and subsequent work through 2023–2024.
- A survey of CIVVIH members (Nov–Dec 2024) confirmed the importance of the draft but raised concerns that it was too long and had some similarities to the [Valletta Principles](#).

Current process:

- In January 2025, based on the survey results, the Bureau decided the draft should be considered a **working milestone** in the reflection process.
- A new Bureau-led working group was created with global representation (Europe, Asia and America).
- The group has met several times in 2025. Work is ongoing, and the document is still untitled.

Purpose and scope:

- The document will be a **position statement/recommendation** (max ~6 pages).
- Its aim: to guide conservation of historic cities within today's challenges (urban resilience, climate change, digital transformation, equity, sustainable development).
- Target audience: not only experts, but also policymakers, communities, and other stakeholders.

Proposed structure:

Four chapters.

Context – natural/human challenges, resilience, global urban responses.

Concept – defining the historic city (structure, culture, fabric, resources).

Capacity for action – knowledge (what to know), policy (what to do), implementation (how to do it), with attention to ethics, participation, digital dilemmas, equity, and authenticity.

Conclusion – reframing conservation as essential for sustainable, resilient, creative urban development.

Attendants' comments for this topic referred to:

- **Key principles:**
 - Multicultural and interdisciplinary input.
 - Balance between expert knowledge and community voices.
 - Ethical, inclusive, and transparent approaches.
 - Responsible use of new technologies (addressing digital divide, privacy, authenticity).
- **Next steps:**
 - The new draft will be circulated to all members for feedback.
 - Members are reminded that this must be an **international document**, not a regional one.
 - The goal is to finalise a concise set of **principles**, not detailed guidelines, to respond to today's rapidly changing global context.

- 5) The next annual meeting will take place during the 22nd ICOMOS GA in Malaysia. That will take place from October 17 to 24 2026.

Minutes were written by Juan A. García-Esparza, Secretary General

Approved by Paula Cordeiro, President

November 24, 2025