

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (97) 2

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

ON SUSTAINED CARE OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

AGAINST PHYSICAL DETERIORATION DUE TO POLLUTION

AND OTHER SIMILAR FACTORS

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 4 February 1997,
at the 583rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15. b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to the European Cultural Convention signed at Paris on 19 December 1954, in particular Article 1 thereof;

Having regard to the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, opened for signature at Granada on 3 October 1985, which recognises that the architectural heritage constitutes "an irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversity of Europe's cultural heritage, bears inestimable witness to our past and is a common heritage of all Europeans", and in particular to Articles 8, 16 and 17, paragraph 3, thereof;

Having regard to the European Convention (revised) on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage signed in Valletta on 16 January 1992;

Having regard to the resolutions of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for the Architectural Heritage, held at Granada on 3 and 4 October 1985, in particular Resolution No. 4 on the physical conservation of the architectural heritage and the need to combat pollution;

Having regard to its previous recommendations:

- on the protection of the architectural heritage against natural disasters (Recommendation No. R (93) 9);

- on the integrated conservation of cultural landscape areas as part of landscape policies (Recommendation No. R (95) 9);

Having regard to the Convention on Civil Liability for damage resulting from activities dangerous to the environment, opened for signature in Lugano on 21 June 1993;

Considering that the acceleration of the physical deterioration of the heritage traceable to pollution seriously threatens its survival and the possibility of its being handed down to future generations;

Aware of the fact that no method is currently available to treat, and thus protect, historic buildings in the long term, and that the only way of ensuring their preservation is through their regular upkeep;

Bearing in mind that the specific problems of conserving the architectural heritage must be taken into account when defining comprehensive policies pursued by member states for combating pollution and improving the quality of the environment;

Noting that developments in exchanges of information and experience in Europe on heritage policy should lead to an increased dialogue on problems relating to the deterioration of materials and to techniques for the physical conservation of the built environment;

Stressing the need to carry out risk analysis and risk management in the context of sustained monitoring and regular maintenance;

Stressing the necessity to protect the cultural heritage within general policies combating air pollution and other similar factors,

1. Resolves that the present recommendation replaces Recommendation No. R (88) 5 on control of physical deterioration of the architectural heritage accelerated by pollution;
2. Recommends that the governments of member states, in formulating and implementing general policies to combat air pollution and other similar causes of deterioration as well as overall conservation and protection policies for the cultural heritage, have regard to the principles and guidelines set out in the appendix to this recommendation.

Appendix to Recommendation No. R (97) 2

I. Definitions

For the purposes of this recommendation the cultural heritage comprises all movable and immovable property which, in view of its cultural value and significance, must be preserved and passed on to future generations.

The terms "pollution and other factors" refers to the fact that deterioration is due to synergistic processes where weathering agents are enhanced in a harmful way by pollution and inappropriate care.

"Risk" is the probability of damage to or loss of cultural heritage likely to result from weathering agents enhanced by pollution and inappropriate care.

"Risk analysis" is the systematic study allowing the identification and assessment of all risks which threaten the physical condition and the economic and cultural value of the heritage concerned.

"Risk management" is characterised by the optimisation of the relevant financial, technical and human resources based on thorough knowledge and skill and good co-ordination, with an emphasis on good communication between everyone involved.

II. Scope

The objective of the conservation and protection policies for the cultural heritage should be:

- i. to eliminate or mitigate the causes of deterioration (negative climatic effects, pollutants, moisture, biological growth, vibration, and so on);
- ii. to counteract the evolution of deterioration processes by influencing conditions (microclimate, biological growth, and so on);
- iii. to make the object less vulnerable to weathering agents by identifying and eliminating or mitigating intrinsic factors that accelerate deterioration.

III. Legal and administrative framework

The protection of the cultural heritage should be taken into account when implementing general policies for the reduction of pollution and other similar causes of deterioration by:

- i. regulations issued at international, national, regional or local level aimed at the stringent reduction of organic and inorganic pollutants, including dust and particulates;
- ii. urban planning and traffic policies directed at reducing or even abolishing motor traffic in the immediate vicinity of important monuments or major historic sites;
- iii. restriction on localisation of major sources of pollutants in urban planning and environmental policies;
- iv. regulation concerning responsibilities of owners/users for upkeep and maintenance.

Permanent structures should be developed to ensure sustained monitoring, development and implementation of long-term research and training for the upkeep and maintenance of the cultural heritage.

IV. Organisational and programming measures

Organisational and programming measures are needed to ensure the development of strategies for the protection of the cultural heritage against deterioration, as well as the development of long-term research and training.

a. Long-term research

Measures for the development of long-term research should be taken by:

- i. improving access to and dissemination of available relevant data;
- ii. pursuing interdisciplinary and specialised research on the deterioration of the built environment;
- iii. carrying out research and gaining practical experience on conservation methods and techniques encompassing all relevant phenomena.

b. Conservation and upkeep

The compilation, interpretation and exchange of information based on sustained research and ongoing practical experience should be undertaken in order to allow the observation of relevant factors including: the development of deterioration processes, evaluation of continuously updated methods of conservation and upkeep, and monitoring of their long-term effects.

The creation and support of permanent institutions should be stimulated and promoted. Their aims should include:

- recognition of the nature, value and history of the heritage concerned, its component parts and its context;
- identification of existing, relevant problems;
- assessment of the state of conservation and of the phenomena of deterioration;
- identification of ongoing physical, chemical and biological deterioration processes and their interaction;
- monitoring of their evolution and effects;
- sustained monitoring of remedial interventions and their effects.

c. Strategies and implementation of risk analysis, management and sustained maintenance

The main objective is to define risks and to minimise deterioration.

Agreed protocols and guidelines for risk management analysis and sustained maintenance should be embodied in applied codes of practice for the care of cultural heritage. These guidelines should include the inspection and assessment of failures in structure or functions and their repairs.

The strategy should encompass risk analysis by:

- evaluating the cultural and economic values of the heritage at risk;
- establishing the state of preservation;
- checking failures in structure and function;
- identifying the nature and location of the deterioration processes;
- monitoring their evolution, rates and effects;
- making a prognosis for future evolution.

On the basis of this analysis, practical intervention should be undertaken locally, by periodic servicing of functional equipment, repair of damage and replacement of sacrificial elements, as well as by undertaking monitoring and intervention to minimise ongoing deterioration.

Sustained monitoring should imply periodic inspection, with emphasis on the risk area, continuous observation of failures in structures, materials and functions as well as guidelines for upkeep and daily use. Maintenance implies repairs of failing points and reduction of similar risks.

The risk analysis should be based on comparative data to provide a cost-benefit analysis of appropriately timed maintenance.

V. Training

The training of craft workers and professionals concerned should be promoted.

Measures should be taken to encourage the training of professionals and craft workers to gain capability of understanding the problems of deterioration and conservation in their entirety and in their interdisciplinary context. This should be promoted at university, technical and craft-worker level.

Multidisciplinary training for researchers, teachers and conservationists should be initiated in the following areas:

- recognition of the nature, value and history of the concerned object, its component parts and its context;
- theory and general method of heritage conservation;
- phenomena, processes and causes of deterioration, including the relevant analytical techniques;
- risk analysis and management;
- assessment and updating of methods and techniques for sustained maintenance;

- conservation procedures, using traditional or modern working methods, affecting the totality of the relevant phenomena.

Specialised training for restorers and craft workers should be promoted with emphasis on proficiency in traditional craft techniques and the ability to understand, evaluate and apply specific conservation techniques.

VI. Promoting public awareness

Public awareness of the nature of deterioration and of conservation concepts and techniques should be promoted at national, regional and local level among the public at large as well as among owners, users, professionals and financing bodies.

Awareness should also be fostered among people at large on the nature of the risk they themselves may constitute when visiting a cultural site.

VII. European co-operation with a view to extended mutual scientific and technical assistance

European co-operation should be increased with a view to greater scientific and technical effectiveness by:

- i. ensuring better multilateral dissemination of information by developing and concentrating the scientific and technical data available in the various countries in existing professional international bodies;
- ii. developing practical long-term co-operation across borders or between regions.