

Benefits of safeguarding historic urban areas

There are several benefits of preserving and further developing historic urban areas, contributing to the Lisbon and Gothenburg goals.

Economic Dimension

The revitalisation of historic urban areas with their cultural heritage contributes to the creation of jobs, business development and economic growth through

- work generated for local businesses by the labour intensive repair and renovation of the historic fabric,
- the need for specialist skills training,
- the improved location quality and image (heritage environment/ infrastructure) for business activities, in particular for the creative, cultural, tourism and gastronomy industry, and as location factor for investments,
- rehabilitated old buildings which provide special places for businesses (i.e. creative industry),
- attracting and binding highly-skilled workers, businesses, visitors and tourists through the attractiveness and uniqueness of the place (distinguishing from other towns in the global competition; cultural heritage as “trade mark”),
- acting through public investments in the cultural heritage as catalyst for the revitalization of the wider area, attracting local as well as external private investment and stimulating the creation of new developments.

Social and Cultural Dimension

Revitalised historic urban areas with their local cultural heritage contribute

- to recuperate patrimonial value,
- to provide a place of distinctiveness to live and work,
- to local identity, local pride and increased community spirit, bringing people of different backgrounds together (collective identity) and in strong cases activate them to get involved in support of an area and its people,
- to provide a safe environment,
- to improve the quality of life,
- to learn and know about our history and society,
- to give place to local cultural activities,

thus, attracting and binding new and old inhabitants of different generations and social groups, creating a “corporate feeling” and strengthening identification with the town and place.

Environmental Dimension

The maintenance and reuse of the historic fabric, in particular of historic buildings and the historic centre contributes to the efficient handling of natural resources through

- reducing the need/ consumption of new materials (e.g. for construction),
- reducing further land consumption (use of already used areas/ surfaces),
- securing the “city of short ways” (historic urban areas show generally a compact urban structure and are localted in the city centre or nearby, reducing the length of transport ways/ less commuting,
- Attractive historic urban areas contribute to the mitigation of suburbanisation trends (people stay and life in the centre).

Summarizing, well preserved historic urban landscapes contribute strongly to the local and regional competitiveness and attractiveness for inhabitants, businesses and tourists in the global competition, supporting the Lisbon and Gothenburg goals.

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Examples for the benefits named by the HerO partners

Economic

- Business activities to do renovation work
- Car-free zones: benefits for gastronomy sector (GRAZ)
- Bamberg: increase in overnight stays since WH listing
- Through revitalisation of Old Town in Lublin increase in visitors; twice as many people (buying goods and food)
- Heritage helps to construct spatial products (LUBLIN)
- Own brand "OLD TOWN" (GRAZ)
- Florence: rich cultural heritage and almost 100 % economy related to heritage (GIORGIO)

Social

- Local identity
- Bringing different people with different backgrounds together
- People learned from restoring building (mission for the building) (LUBLIN)
- People living in the old town (GRAZ)
- Buildings renovated for social housing; social mixture – 20 years after (POITIERS)
- People started to move to the Old Town (VILNIUS)

Environmental

- revitalize existing buildings before building new ones
- Car-free zones (GRAZ)