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Experience and recommendations of UNESCO Joint Missions i.e. working with WHC Paris and ICOMOS

1. Some remarks about the Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

To begin I would like to remember the basis of all our activities and efforts in this special field:

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopted 16.November 1972 the Convention on World Cultural and Natural Heritage:

- A. For the purpose of this Convention the following shall be considered as “cultural heritage “
- monuments
 - groups of buildings
 - sites
- B. For the purpose of this Convention the following shall be considered as “natural heritage”
- natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups
 - geological and physiographical formations
 - natural sites
- C. It is for each State Party to this convention to identify and delineate the different properties situated in its territory .

The responsibility to ensure identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the natural and cultural heritage belongs primary to the States –they should adopt a general policy

- develop scientific and technical studies and research
- take appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification , protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage.
- decide which sites will be nominated for the national tentative list to be presented to the UNESCO for inscription on the World Heritage List.

Every State Party to this Convention submits to the World Heritage Committee (established within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and elected for a certain period with 21 representatives of the 188 states that signed the charter) a list of its outstanding monuments and sites. After careful consideration, prepared by the World Heritage Centre and evaluated by ICOMOS, the Committee decides to put it on the World Heritage List.

You see the responsible partner to UNESCO is the State Government. But because of the immobility of the site the City, in which the protected heritage is situated, has a huge responsibility. There the knowledge is concentrated, there the physical site is situated, there the people live who are affected by decisions like this.

Experience and recommendation 1: **Partnership between the state levels is crucial. There should be a mutual agreement or some binding process or binding declaration of all acting state levels.**

(see example Dresden Waldschlößchenbrücke – as a member of the Monitoring Group I may say that one direct cause in the process of excluding the Elbe Valley of the World Heritage List may be found besides the conflicts with the population and the local planning authorities in these missing binding procedures between the relevant (in this case four !) state levels)

Let me mention- as I see it- some reasons for the increase of conflicts between cities and UNESCO and /or ICOMOS: The listing of the World Heritage began with regarding and awarding “monuments and sites”. The listed monuments /ensembles had a dimension, that was easily to define, to protect and to maintain. But the more and more the recognition of the importance of the environment grew and the first cities as developed unities in their historic neighbourhood were recognised as “World Heritage Cities”, the more and more conflicts increased - which is quite natural taken into consideration what a complexity of conditions and connections and mutual impacts through centuries are existing in cities. The criteria for selection became more and more not precise enough to solve this complexity, modern requirements grew up and the need of adaptive strategies raised in internal and external public and professional discussions. (Example St.Petersburg Gazprom Tower)

If a city as a whole, its centre or special monuments are through the World Heritage List recognised as one of the precious bequests in the history of mankind, this is on the other hand not only an idealistic point of view but a very strong chance of economic advantage.(Example London: high- risers)In many cities the economic pressure and the wish of the owners or tenants for change give a some what dangerous situation.

Experience and recommendation 2: **a common interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach to those wishes for change in open minded co-operation with UNESCO is the best way to find harmonic solutions.**

In case that those changes raise open conflicts and it comes to a joint mission the procedure is as following :

WHC reports to the Committee when the conflict was brought to the acknowledgement of the WHC. The Committee decides to ask for a Joint Mission to have a better basis for an upcoming decision about the list of danger or even more. The WHC then asks the concerned city to invite representatives of UNESCO and ICOMOS to review by neutral and competent experts the critical situation. The invitation is to be organised by the cities, but the official invitation comes via the state and via the governmental representative (ambassador) of the state to UNESCO. The invited experts have to finalise their Joint Mission by a common report with relevant recommendations that shall be presented through ICOMOS to the WHC and finally to the Committee for decision.

Experience and recommendation 3 :**In case of a joint mission it is to recommend that the city is open minded, gives any necessary information , accepts the good will and competence of the Joint Mission representatives, because international experience ,**

knowledge and the common responsibility for the universal value of the relevant site unifies them all to work for a suitable solution.

2. Cities Approach

The world heritage cities are over all in the excellent position to use the international awareness of their historic values to build up identity in their citizenship and mobilise the civil society for the mission of the World Heritage - that is the Universal Value .This universal value is unique and not to reconstitute when lost. Therefore for the recognition of the economic and city based activities it should be established an advisory board including representatives of the city council, of parties ,of chambers, NGO's and CBO's as well as other partly administrative bodies, who prepare and execute decisions.

These council or advisory board should help to define the objectives that are the goals of the majority of the city based organisations or church related non governmental organisation to have a broad consensus about the inaugural conflict of protection and change.

In consensus this "Round Table "stands for an integrated approach and may decide on the following objectives and strategies:

Objectives:

- to humanise the city by enriching the cultural dimension of community life
- to preserve the historical fabric of the city as the resource of identity and in the main time as the future resource of creativity
- to manage socio-economic and cultural development
- to promote heritage as a vector for sustainable development and a better quality of urban life

Strategies:

- International co-operations
- enhancing links between the site, the historic centre and the city beyond
- integrated approach embracing social, economic and environmental issues
- economic use of the international recognition of the world heritage through marketing and other development strategies

These objects and strategies are at the same time the key elements of a management plan.(see chapter 3)

Taken once more into consideration that the procedures for including a site or a city in the World Heritage List is the responsibility of the state, and that UNESCO is a part of the UN organisation which is a co-operation of States, it is important that the cities , who do the research and the implementation of the site itself and the buffer-zone in their master plans are estimated in the hierarchy and experienced enough to work in an integrated approach to this responsibility. Their principles for a spatial city development and legal foundations should include conservation strategies. Based on this all nominations are related to an overall evaluation by ICOMOS . Although the procedures are complicated, it is the cities responsibility to decide which are the adequate instruments, the optimum structures for participation of the citizens , the necessary involvement of politicians, property owners, tenants and stakeholders and what is the overall best legal basis to secure these goals.

I am mentioning this because there are returning conflicts between cities and the World Heritage Committee on urban developments and modern architecture. Mostly these conflicts raise when wishes of economical interest by developers begin to dominate the cities developments. This is an important point, because it shows, that the listed sites and their vicinity has an increase of interest and an increase of real estate values.

Cities should learn from processes like these to fix in time the development within and in the vicinity of heritage protected sites, so that adequate planning has a future and a balance is possible. On the other hand investors need security in planning as well. The population must know in what direction the development is thought to go and those institutions that are responsible for protection and maintenance must have a security as well concerning the urban development. Otherwise in any new case of investment the conflicts are to come and it begins once more the time and money costing procedure of balancing the conflicting interests.

To use the heritage protected environment for marketing and tourist purposes is legitimate. The only question is that the changes that are necessary to be allowed for constituting liveliness and use of the economic advantage are not in a dimension that destroys through which the living and economic advantage is guaranteed in protecting those intangible values. So priority has to decide in advance where and how development shall be possible and allowed and where not (example Pancrac discussion in Prague on high rise buildings)

The connection between town planning and heritage protection and integration in city- or – master – or developing –or legally binding plans (whatever is the legislation and tradition in the various countries) is an important method to avoid faults like the mentioned ones and to give security to public and private decisions.

Experience and recommendation 4 : Legal binding plans - where ever it is possible - based on research of architectural ,technical, and sociological research , property recognition, visibility studies, mobility concerns and including participation procedures should be the fundament of any decision in case of the “normal “ urban development and the “urban development in heritage protected areas”. Further for the different urban planning procedures the recommendation is given to invite very early the relevant responsible departments for the heritage protection in order to develop the boundaries of changing that shall be allowed, to improve solutions through competitions and to inform UNESCO of intended developments.

3. Management Plans

For each heritage protected site you know that there is a management plan to be implemented. I do not want to speak on these plans in details , but my experience is that they are very often not precise enough concerning their task to give guidelines for maintaining the protected sites(Example: Schloss Schönbrunn – frequency of visitors and their impact on maintenance of paintings and sculptures and precious floors).

The management plan is not an urban plan – but strongly connected to those plans. Often it is connected with PR activities, tourist necessities and in that direction be used as a model for city centre development in any historic town. There is a relationship between the urban planning restrictions and the management plan in order to take into consideration an impact assessment on possible future allowed or not allowed projects. This is an issue that has to be

solved in co-operation with those who have interests in using the increasing real estate possibilities – and this not only for them but for the benefit of the city as well if the city is prudent in organising common win-win situations.

A city, that is able to balance the interests of property owners, interested investors and especially young people, for arts and music, for innovation, for residents on the one side and for heritage tourists on the other side who are seeking the not changed environment - that means a wide spread line of diversity - has the power to stabilise the heritage protected sites as an important treasure for the spatial development of the future as well as an economic asset. To describe these measurements in the management plan is an advantage especially if the management plan is presented to the legal body of the city for adoption or ratification.

This balance is the main task for strengthening the city centre giving the new the same chance as the old. But to find this balance is very often the origin of conflicts, when Joint Missions are necessary to work for the best of a compromised solution (Example: Graz, Kastner und Öhler Warehouse)

To reduce this possible conflicts there should be a permanent dialogue with the relevant parties in a city and with ICOMOS, with the civil society and stakeholders on quality, maintenance and value – which changes as well.

Sometimes even more important is to reach the residents in the vicinity, the population living in the city, and raise their feeling in being a part of a “world family” of examples of what mankind created during different centuries. Make them proud of the outstanding value and train their understanding for the future that is based on what we inherited (Example :Zeche Zollverein Essen –after feeling long time as a loser peoples slogan is now OUR World Heritage is OUR responsibility)

Experience and recommendation 5: The key issue for success is to combine high competence of experts in the development goals with the knowledge that the residents and people have who identify themselves with their environment and the public sphere. How to get them involved so that they become knowledgeable and respected partner in the whole process and that they act as “stakeholder” is crucial for the overcoming of any heritage in our cities .

To find this balance in city centres with qualified environments and successful management plans embedded in an overall vision for the whole town have sufficient potentials and chances for success especially if we look at the other huge task in our towns: that is to stabilise quarters with economic decrease or ethnic problems or shrinking population (Example Görlitz, one of the most famous cities in Germany East with an extraordinary stock of renaissance buildings but losing half of the population because of the economic weakness.) Initiatives for housing to stabilise residential population with innovative approaches as special strategies might be developed with priority and included in the management plans as well, because maintenance of the heritage relies on a living population .

To strengthen the centre – in the most of our European cities these are the historic centres and in some cases even World Heritage listed centres - means to strengthen the city as a whole. For this task the commitment of all stakeholders and the civil society is necessary. Strengthening the heritage is one of the most important knock-on effects. Their cultural, social, economical and aesthetic values are an excellent capital to be used and increased. Maintaining

their values, but to allow adaptation on to days necessities and innovative using is the best economic basis of their sustainable maintenance

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