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International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture & Urbanism
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THE INTBAU SIBIU MEMORANDUM

INTERNATIONAL MEMORANDUM ON THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HERITAGE AND REGENERATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

FINAL TEXT (v.6)

PREAMBLE

The historic buildings, building traditions and crafts of Central and Eastern Europe constitute a precious living resource of centuries of unique culture and heritage. Therefore their protection and regeneration is a critical need. They remain powerful, if sometimes overlooked, economic, cultural and environmental assets for the modern world.

In the Communist era, traditional places in the region were neglected as new modernistic developments - often in the form of new blocks of flats – formed the new agenda of governments. The crafts programmes and schools that supported their maintenance and repair declined.

After the collapse of communism, Central and Eastern European countries began restorations of individual buildings or entire heritage areas. The focus was very much on the best way to protect heritage, with a focus on the skills and materials used in the process. But as the old places returned to their former glory, global market pressure began to affect redevelopment patterns. Historic areas saw new modernistic developments out of scale, style and proportion, that started to threaten the harmony and balance of old traditional places in the region.

Today, citizens are becoming more aware of the treasures of hard won human experience embodied in the built environment. Increasingly, they regard historic environments as a precious common heritage which must be safeguarded for future generations. Activist organisations throughout the region are lobbying for strengthened legal frameworks to protect heritage and traditional neighbourhoods. There is also a growing desire to ensure that new developments meet high standards of sustainability, matching the quality, longevity and adaptability exemplified by the traditional places.

To address these concerns, members of the International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism (INTBAU), came together for a conference on "History, Heritage and Regeneration," held in the medieval city of Sibiu, Romania, from 23-25 September 2007. This Memorandum documents the conclusions of that meeting. It offers guidelines for best practice in adequate protection of the architectural heritage of Central and Eastern Europe, with a particular emphasis on new sustainable development.

DEFINITIONS

Heritage: Our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass to future generations (UNESCO definition).

Central & Eastern Europe: The group of countries previously referred to as the "Eastern Bloc" formed of the Central & Eastern European countries under the influence of the USSR and the countries which formed The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on mainland Europe.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.(Brundtland Report, 1987)

GUIDELINES FOR HERITAGE PROTECTION

ARTICLE 1 The heritage of the built environment is not limited to buildings and their materials. Heritage includes expressions of local traditions, crafts, skills, and knowledge.

ARTICLE 2 Heritage embodies knowledge and practice of previous enduring, sustainable ways of living that may offer vital insights and resources for the modern challenge of sustainability.

ARTICLE 3 Conservation and creative continuity must be grounded in an anthropological vision in order to enhance geo-cultural identity and safeguard local culture.

ARTICLE 4 It is important to adopt a strong conservation model that encourages minimum interventions to heritage buildings and towns as the potential for damage from new structures is often under-estimated.

ARTICLE 5 New uses for historic structures should be encouraged and facilitated. Sensitive modifications must be allowed, with a goal of allowing later reversals, and preserving the knowledge about the original construction.

ARTICLE 6 It is urgent to follow Article 6 of the Venice Charter: "The conservation of a monument implies preserving a setting which is not out of scale. Wherever the traditional setting exists, it must be kept. No new construction, demolition or modification which would alter the relations of mass and colour must be allowed."

Accordingly, the building of tall buildings or other discordant structures in the vicinity of heritage sites must be restricted if they alter the view into or out of historic sites, urban centres and areas, or if they otherwise violate Article 6 of the Venice Charter.

ARTICLE 7 To aid in the reduction of carbon emissions and other sustainability goals, it must be a priority to refurbish historic buildings with unobtrusive, reversible building technologies offering much greater efficiency of resource use. New research and publication on sustainable building technologies and carbon measurement must also be promoted.

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC POLICY

ARTICLE 8 Adequate legislation on heritage protection must be adopted and enforced from local to central level, incorporating the principles stated herein.

ARTICLE 9 Safeguards must be developed to mitigate the negative effects of market forces in excessively altering, over-gentrifying or otherwise damaging a district. These may include public legal protections, or private or charitable mechanisms and processes. Government has a role in partnering with Non Governmental Organisations to achieve such public goals.

GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF MATERIALS

ARTICLE 10 Natural materials which are locally sourced should be used whenever possible both in restorations and new buildings.

ARTICLE 11 Wherever possible in restoring old buildings, the materials used should be the same or as similar as possible to the original materials of the building. At the same time, the ability to distinguish new work should be preserved through identifiable characteristics, or through interpretive materials.

GUIDELINES ON LOCAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

ARTICLE 12 It is essential that local people are involved in the development process from the earliest stages. Where possible, such development should be generated locally and draw upon local knowledge and experience.

ARTICLE 13 It is important to engage with a broad and representative cross-section of the community's population, irrespective of age, gender, ethnic origins, religious beliefs, or other cultural characteristics.

ARTICLE 14 It must be a priority to promote education and public awareness of the value of heritage, and a greater appreciation of its role in economic and environmental sustainability, cultural identity and integrity, and human health and well-being.

Signed (etc)