



E.C.C.O.

with the participation of ENCoRE

and the support of ICCROM



Draft of
European Recommendation for the
Conservation and Restoration of Cultural
Heritage

*Approved by the General Assembly of E.C.C.O.
Bruxelles, 17 March 2008*

RECOMMENDATION ON THE CONSERVATION-RESTORATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Committee of Ministers, in virtue of article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to bring about a closer union among its members, particularly in order to protect and implement the ideals and principles that are their common heritage;

In view of the European Cultural Convention signed in Paris on 19 December 1954, notably article 1;

In view of the Convention for the Safeguard of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, opened for signature in Granada on 3 October 1985, recognizing that the architectural heritage constitutes an «irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversity of the cultural heritage of Europe, an inestimable testimony of our past and shared by all Europeans», notably its articles 6, 8, 10 paragraph 2, 17 paragraph 3, 18 and 19;

In view of the European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) signed at Valletta on 16 January 1992, underlining that «responsibility for protection of the archaeological heritage falls not only on the State directly concerned, but also on all European countries, in order to reduce the risks of degradation and promote conservation, in supporting exchanges of experts and experience», notably its articles 3 paragraph i-b), and 4 paragraph ii;

In view of the framework-Convention of the Council of Europe on the value of cultural heritage, signed at Faro on 17 October 2005, highlighting the «value and potential of well-managed cultural heritage as a resource for sustainable development and quality of life in a society in constant evolution», notably its articles 1, 9 and 11b;

In view of the resolutions of the 2nd European conference of ministers in charge of architectural heritage, held at Granada on 3 and 4 October 1985, notably Resolution no. 3 regarding the economic impact of heritage conservation;

In view of the resolutions of the 3rd European conference of ministers in charge of architectural heritage, held at Valletta on 16 and 17 January 1992, notably Resolution no. 3 regarding the priorities of a pan-European project for cultural heritage;

In view of the resolutions of the 4th European conference of ministers in charge of architectural heritage, held at Helsinki on 30 and 31 May 1996, notably Resolution no. 2 on cultural heritage, factor of sustainable development;

In view of these previous recommendations:

Recognizing that cultural heritage constitutes not only an irreplaceable expression of the wealth and diversity of European Culture, but also a resource for sustainable development and quality of life in a society in constant evolution;

Considering that interventions on cultural heritage must act with respect for its integrity and not compromise its intrinsic values;

Judging that the conservation-restoration of cultural heritage is one of the essential factors in ensuring its transmission to future generations;

Observing that specific questions of conservation-restoration must be borne in mind when Member States are defining global policies for the protection and safeguard of their cultural heritage;

Underlining that high-quality intervention on cultural heritage can only be ensured through systems of professional qualification including continuing professional development as the basis for recognition of the people, firms and organizations in charge of conservation-restoration

Noting that cultural heritage must be protected and safeguarded by implementing, where necessary, appropriate conservation-restoration treatments and/or preventive measures guaranteeing long life to cultural heritage and the respect of its values,

Recommends to the governments of the Member States:

- to refer to the principles contained in the charter annexed to this recommendation when developing juridical standards that define and organize conservation-restoration, as well as the implementation of conservation-restoration strategies for their cultural heritage;
- to guarantee the quality of conservation-restoration work by making sure that conditions of access to and exercise of the profession of conservator-restorer are incorporated in the framework of a system recognizing advanced professional qualification, based on the level of studies in conservation-restoration (university or recognized equivalent) and on the quality of acquired professional experience;
- to encourage and to support the development of specialized higher education in conservation-restoration that closely unites the teaching of theoretical and practical subjects.
- to include the conservation-restoration of cultural property into the measures that comply with the objectives of integrated conservation of cultural heritage;
- to consider that conservation-restoration is an integrated part of project planning involving cultural heritage and should be taken into consideration from the outset.
- to adapt their national legislation and orient their conservation-restoration policy for cultural property following the principles declared in the present recommendation;
- to take, with the support and collaboration of the professional organizations concerned, all appropriate measures to assure the implementation of these principles, established by the present recommendation.

Charges the General Secretary of the Council of Europe to transmit the present recommendation to the States that are not parties to the European Cultural Convention.

The charter annexed to the present recommendation forms an integral part of it.

**CHARTER REGARDING THE
CONSERVATION-RESTORATION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY,**

annexed to the recommendation on the conservation-restoration of cultural heritage.

1. Objectives of conservation-restoration

Conservation-restoration contributes to the safeguarding and understanding of cultural property benefiting present and future generations, in its aesthetic and historical meanings, its physical integrity, its context and its social uses.

2. Definition of conservation-restoration

The term 'conservation-restoration' means any direct or indirect treatment or measures that are planned and carried out on cultural property, following the objectives defined in point 1 of this Charter.

3. Treatments and Measures in conservation-restoration

Conservation-restoration is a coherent, coordinated, integrated and systematic process of studies and activities that include planning, treatment and measures intrinsic to preventive conservation, remedial conservation and restoration, as well as documentation of each phase in this process.

- a) The planning process encompasses historical, technical, scientific and feasibility studies to determine objectives and methodologies, in the establishment and evaluation of proposed conservation restoration work.

A diagnostic examination is intrinsic to the process as it determines the constituent materials of the cultural property, enables an assessment of its condition, identifies previous alterations – their nature, extent, and causes – leading to treatment recommendation.

- b) Preventive conservation consists of indirect actions on cultural property with the purpose of avoiding or delaying its deterioration.

Preventive conservation is an indispensable part of handling, use, transport, climate control, storage and display of cultural property.

- c) Remedial conservation is direct intervention on cultural property in those cases where it is so fragile, or its deterioration is so rapid that it is at risk of being lost.

Remedial conservation mainly consists of interventions to stabilize, consolidate and disinfest.

- d) Restoration consists of direct intervention on cultural property, which due to past alterations or deterioration, has lost part of its meaning. Restoration is a complex ensemble of actions aimed at facilitating the appreciation, the understanding and the utilisation of the cultural property. Most often, it modifies the appearance and state of the cultural property.

Restoration can include actions such as cleaning, re-adhering, and the reconstruction and integration of missing parts

- e) Documentation consists of collecting, recording and organising all written and visual information on cultural property including its condition, treatment and measures as previously described in a), b), c) and d). It includes the justifications for conservation-restoration decisions. This documentation is integral to the cultural property and its conservation-restoration.

4. Principles of conservation-restoration

All interventions must respect the following principles:

- a) Conservation-restoration must respect the aesthetic, historic, spiritual and social meaning of cultural property and take into consideration both its physical integrity and context.
- b) The products, materials and procedures used must not harm cultural property nor pose an unjustifiable risk to the environment and people. The methods and operational mode as well as the materials used, must not compromise – as to the extent possible – any future examinations, treatment and analyses.

Method and materials must also be compatible with the constituent materials of the cultural property. Conservation-restoration treatment should be governed by the principle that all treatments are reversible.

Should a reproduction, copy or cast of a cultural object be contemplated, the procedures implemented should not involve undue damage to the original.

- c) Conservation-restoration must consider the social-usage requirements of cultural property. Should social usage of cultural property appear to be incompatible with its preservation, the owner or juridical body responsible for it must be advised of the fact.
- d) Conservation-restoration planning must be an interdisciplinary process between the conservation-restoration specialist in charge of the project, and other responsible stakeholders.

The responsibilities of these different individuals or organisations must be established and shared according to their professional qualifications.

This charter is annexed to the recommendation on conservation-restoration of cultural heritage.