

PRIORITY THEMATIC: Protecting and strengthening the residential function of the city's historic centres

1. Introduction: explaining the proposals

In order to address this priority thematic, it is essential that the vital values of heritage conservation are followed and respected. In this sense, it is important to highlight the important role of international conventions such as the Venice Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, the Enhancing our Heritage Toolkit, the United Nations 2030 Agenda or the Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society.

The Venice charter includes a set of advisory recommendations to address the management of restoration and conservation processes of World Heritage historical sites which shall be followed in the proposals presented in this document. Moreover, the Faro Convention establishes an important mindset to consider when managing World Heritage, particularly considering the connections between the heritage and the population of the cities it belongs to.

Finally, the principles set in the Enhancing our Heritage Toolkit and the 2030 Agenda must be taken into consideration to ensure a proper sustainable and respectful course of action. For instance, the Sustainable Development Goal 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” specifically aims to safeguard global natural and cultural heritage, an objective that must be kept in mind in the development of the proposals.

Concerning the current situation of the cities represented in relation to the topic of this priority thematic, it is vital to comprehend the specific context of each World Heritage Area and its main problems. In Mostar, traffic is a big part of the city, especially because of its status as heritage site since the quality of people that are living in these parts of cities suffer but also tourists that come need parking either for buses or cars. That is why we need organised traffic in general and parking zones.

Regarding Baeza, The project of future pedestrianisation could affect the life of the citizens that keep alive the centre of the city and who maintain local employment activity. Since the 13th century the city has taken care about activities and manners that take place in the historic centre.

Additionally, the historical centre of Aranjuez has been suffering for a long time from a gradual loss of permanent residents. Consequently, 14.3% of the family-living spaces of the city were reported to be empty in 2021. This process is also related to the disappearing local commercial establishments from the main streets of the historical centre, and aggravated by the deteriorating heritage buildings all over the city. In this context, the Municipality of Aranjuez has initiated different projects to address the situation which must be continued and expanded.

Finally, Évora the residential population in the historical centre is around 1300 to 1400 people while temporary population is around 4500 to 5000 people. Out of the 4500/5000 houses, 33% are tourists accommodations. University student's are also a big problem, and as such the municipal is trying to built more residential spaces for students outside of the city walls. The abandonment of residents in the city walls and the transformation os those housing spaces in buildings of commercial use, such as restaurants, airbnb, offices and warehouses is a trend that we have noticed since at least 1991. Most of

this buildings are neither local nor traditional commerce. In consequence of this phenomenon we have seen and increase of abandoned and/or in ruins buildings, as well inheritances problems.

2. Objectives of these proposals

- a. Limit the traffic (construct some underground parkings in the surroundings areas or adapt available public transport to the environment)
- b. Restoration and heritage-conservation initiatives of historical buildings for both residential purposes and modern uses. Refurbishment plans can be developed in order to enable new housing structures within the historical centre while still protecting its heritage buildings and values: respecting the established city aesthetic and preserving its artistic features.

In addition, policies which have been already developed in other World Heritage Cities can be expanded throughout the collaborative network. In this sense, taxes on abandoned and empty buildings, which have already been adopted in Brussels, could be useful to encourage individual landowners to restore their inherited historical real estate properties.

- c. Implement mindful touristic practices by raising awareness of the need for protecting heritage structures and adopt measures to advance in this sense. For example, an additional payment in hotels and touristic establishments intended for investments in heritage conservation.
- d. Improvement of the quality of life of residents in heritage zones could be managed through:
 - i. Enhancing local commerce to revitalise historical cities and encourage citizens to live in the centre. Small local enterprises can receive aid and bonuses to establish their businesses in the city centre by refurbishing the buildings to maintain their historical heritage. Additionally, the project can foster mindful practices that respect and protect heritage of the city, by promoting local crafts, gastronomy and customs. Local commerce can also be promoted through municipal initiatives such as the establishment of periodical flea markets where local shops can sell their products, the development of competitions related to typical gastronomy or the celebration of artistic fairs to foster local handcrafts and traditions.
 - ii. Providing benefits for residents in World Heritage City Centres, such as housing tax reductions, parking facilities or special discounts.
 - iii. Tourism Restrictions. Develop a visitor management system that
 - iv. minimises negative impacts and enhances the visitor experience: improved quality of experience and increased visitor satisfaction, established regulations and a decrease in negative impacts of visitor activities at the World Heritage Site, increased human resources and capacity for all stakeholders in world cultural heritage tourism (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/894/>)

- v. Student housing (through the construction of student residences outside of the historical centre)
- vi. Rebuild and improve water supply systems so it is able to withstand the increased need of water.
- e. Incentivise the economy (sustainable and respectful perspective of tourism)
- f. Urban landscape (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/hul/>) (<https://whc.unesco.org/document/160163>) - urbanisation and globalisation of cities change pace of residents, positive - enhances the population, negative - undermine the sense of the place.
- g. Create green spaces in the centre places - intensity and speed of life leaves little time to be in nature. Green spaces offer more spaces to enjoy but also create environmentally more acceptable space and more green surfaces.
- h. Migration - within city and within cities can be tricky because of the constant change and traffic creating between two places.

3. Challenges

<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keeping cities alive, regarding both their heritage and their citizens' life. ● Improving the conservation of the city's heritage. ● Raising awareness 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The limiting of tourism access can negatively affect the economy. ● It may be difficult to encourage the local population to adopt some proposals if they do not feel deeply connected to their heritage ● Poor awareness of values of heritage
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintaining the city's identity (daily activity, manners, accents) ● Intangible heritage. ● Enhancing the connection of the city's population with their heritage. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restoration initiatives must be respectful with the heritage in order to avoid its deterioration. ● Private companies may let buildings crumble so that they can rebuild them without obeying the original spaces that are protected by the law. ● Lack of finances.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion all of these objectives aim to preserve heritage sites in different parts of the world. They can be implemented as partially or as a whole. The most important goal is to enhance and keep the quality of residences while visitors enjoy heritage sites, as well increasing the number of residents in the historical centre. In addition, we have to improve the coexistence between tourism and citizens and draw a discontinued line to preserve the intangible heritage.