

WP5 Development

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Guidelines in the Albanian perspective:
“a framework to build a structural system of research and research training”

1. Introduction - Goals of the deliverable

This document aims to encourage and facilitate the opening of study programs or research programs access to conservation/restoration research data derived from European funded research projects.

The heritage conservation field places great importance on the use of principles and standards in guiding research teams to appropriate and focus on conservation and valorisation of cultural assets.

Conservation and restoration activities are not limited to physical intervention; they begin with identifying, understanding and defining cultural values and their significant features, which is a central basis for designation in every national system of cultural heritage protection.

The research system needs to take into account this first statement and identify a dynamic process of protecting heritage, that includes strong theoretical principles, established standards of study and good practices in carrying out conservation measures.

The present framework for conservation/restoration standards and regulated practice at European level and enhancement of the communication between professionals and their mobility is provided by the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers Organisations (ECCO) and European Network for Conservation-Restoration Education (ENCoRE).

ECCO was established primarily to organise, advance, and promote the profession of conservator-restorer on a scientific, practical, and cultural level. On the other hand, the

European Network for Conservation and Restoration in Education (ENCoRE) is a network organisation composed of higher education institutions in the field of conservation and restoration.

European education on Conservation and Restoration stands as a star of excellence in the global academic landscape. Renowned for its rich history, rigorous standards, and diverse offerings, European institutions provide a world-class education to students from around the globe. Because of this, the educational model can be exported and applied globally in a variety of contexts. A novel strategy for the preservation and restoration of all forms of cultural assets is put forward in the REACH project, which has analysed the Albanian legal framework taking into consideration also the best practices. The project aimed to develop a potential research framework by analysing the outcomes achieved by higher education institutions in European Member Countries and making use of their experiences in this field.

Guidelines in the Albanian perspective: a framework to keep up to date the structural system of research and research training.

This document combines suggestions for research policies in the field of conservation and restoration, and providing support and assistance to Albanian academics and other partners to implement scientific approaches through a variety of solutions. The European Commission has released a large number of charters, recommendations and guidance relating to the proper treatment of cultural heritage. At their core is the understanding of cultural heritage in its wider context and interpretation: cultural heritage comprises a wide array of features and a spectrum of values that describe its significance both to local communities and the wider European community. UNESCO definition for cultural heritage is worldwide accepted: Cultural heritage includes artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance. It includes tangible heritage (movable, immobile and underwater), intangible cultural heritage (ICH) embedded into cultural, and natural heritage artefacts, sites or monuments. The definition excludes ICH related to other cultural domains such as festivals, celebration etc. It covers industrial heritage and cave paintings UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics.

REACH project has developed and produced this document to design its possible use by Albanian scholars in case there arises the need for further research in the field of heritage conservation and restoration, guaranteeing in this way its future protection for future generations. It has been developed in collaboration with the Albanian Ministry of Education and Sports and experts with broad international experience and backgrounds provided within the project.

The Guidelines materialized in this document are a starting point which have a considerable importance and potential to be taken into consideration when setting education and research system, criteria and methods needed to regulate the education and scientific research in the field of conservation/restoration of cultural heritage, considering the specifics and characteristics of such studies, and to be further used to stimulate the active involvement of both the authorities and the wider local academic community in issues of heritage protection and promotion.

2. The professionals and researcher in the cultural heritage sector

The cultural industry offers a variety of specialists to deal directly with cultural heritage issues. The Italian example in particular, taken into consideration during REACH project, after a thorough analysis and discussions has concluded with recognizing four distinct professionals dealing with cultural heritage such as:

1. *Conservator-Restorer*

The Conservator-Restorer is a professional who has the training, knowledge, skills, experience and understanding to act with the aim of preserving cultural heritage for the future, and according to the considerations outlined below.

The fundamental role of the Conservator-Restorer is the preservation of cultural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. The Conservator-Restorer contributes to the perception, appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage in respect of its environmental context and its significance and physical properties.

The activity of a conservator- restorer consists of technical examination, preservation, and conservation of cultural property. To conform to the above professional characteristics and specifications, conservator-restorers must receive artistic, technical and scientific training based upon a well-rounded general education.

2. *Diagnostic expert / Conservation scientist*

The diagnostic expert is a person who has obtained a specific education and is specialised in diagnostic methodologies, by exploiting several non-invasive techniques of investigation that lead into the development of new materials and approaches for the study, the preservation, the valorisation and the access to Cultural Heritage objects.

The preparation combines solid technical and scientific training with expertise in the fields of history-art, archaeology, archiving-bibliography and economics.

3. *Cultural Heritage Manager*

The CH manager focuses on preserving and making accessible all of cultural heritage objects (no matter the nature of the heritage) from intangible elements such as music, food, dance, and dress, to tangible elements ranging from natural habitats, to the built environment—like historic buildings, monuments, and cities. He/she contributes to the development of the tourism industry while preserving and promoting the educational and cultural values of historic and natural sites.

3. Research criteria for conservation and restoration of cultural heritage

The main goals of the guideline, for a correct approach to conservation/restoration process, include:

- ***Promoting an interdisciplinary approach*** in planning of heritage conservation in archaeological sites, historical centres, museums;
- ***Promoting the use of standard models*** for institutional and public participation that can facilitate communication among experts of different disciplines related to the heritage;
- ***Creating understanding of some research-based principles*** for interdisciplinary communication by means of practical tools

Considering the complexity of the activities for appropriate heritage conservation, the guidelines try to define four fundamental and exemplified steps to understand a standard initial procedure.

First: the inventory procedure

The compilation of inventory is closely linked to the process of protection of heritage. That is because the inventory activities specifically address the question of identifying and recognizing the cultural heritage asset.

International core data standards relating to different categories of immovable and movable cultural assets, as presented in an important document published by the Council of Europe in 2009 the *Guidance on Inventory and Documentation of the Cultural Heritage*, have been included for almost all the recommended inventory compilation sections for immovable and movable cultural heritage assets.

Very important is to distinguish between movable, immovable and intangible heritage, which requires different approaches - in terms of terminology and definitions - to the production of content. In order to establish a correct research system, scholars and teachers need to make a distinction between:

- I. inventory of immovable cultural heritage assets,
- II. inventory of movable cultural heritage assets (objects/ materials),
- III. inventory of spiritual/immaterial cultural heritage assets (elements).

Concerning the complexity of the process of research and the procedures for the protection and preservation of the findings, the future guidelines will treat separately the procedure of inventorying sites and the procedure for inventorying objects which could have been removed from their original location during past years or which are accidentally found (referred to the archaeological items).

In case of preservation of archaeological objects, the inventory is intended for appropriate documentation of excavation. Archaeological fieldwork is a complex process, an intrusive research aimed at the discovery of structures or objects of an archaeological character. The documentation of each phase is fundamental and recommended. The methodology of archaeological research is defined as reconnaissance and field mapping or survey, in order to discover new archaeological sites and structures, provide spatial identification of archaeological structures; and make accurate and full descriptions of visible parts of objects.

Second: the diagnostic analysis

The conservation of heritage requires detailed knowledge of the characteristics of its constituent materials and their state of conservation, making it possible to identify risk factors and conditions as well as the need for specific measures. On the basis of this knowledge the most effective intervention strategies and the most suitable conservation solutions can be selected.

The diagnosis of material typologies and possible degradations must follow specific methodologies in order to understand the characterisations of artistic objects or the structure and building methods, to individuate the alteration processes, and to evaluate and control the structural safety of the site and the general conditions of artifacts.

Integrated methods both in situ (sonic and ultrasonic techniques, X-Ray fluorescence, penetrometric and rebound tests) and in the laboratory (optical and electronic microscopy, X-Ray diffractometry, ion chromatography, Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy and microscopy, thermogravimetry, mercury porosimetry) could be used in order to optimise the diagnostic data, searching for correlations between in situ and laboratory results, and to determine the most effective diagnostic procedures.

Third: conservation method decision

For purposes of planning and management a possible conservation/restoration intervention, it's fundamental to demonstrate the historical character of the area of interest (or of the objects) and evaluation of the condition, integrity and authenticity of the asset.

For these reasons, guidelines present three challenges:

- identifying all the values of the heritage in question;
- describing them;
- integrating different conflicting values, so that they can inform the resolution of different stakeholder interests

Methodologically, conservation of heritage is fraught with difficulties. These problems stem from factors such as the diverse nature of heritage (used materials, executive techniques, etc.), the fact that values change over time and are strongly shaped by contextual factors (such as

social forces, economic opportunities, and cultural trends), the fact that community or owners require specific results, and the wide variety of methodologies and tools for working on the object don't allow that.

It is very important to know that conservation management and planning should employ not a single discipline or a single method; therefore, a combination of methods from a variety of disciplines should be included in any comprehensive intervention.

Fourth: valorisation and cultural tourism

The research in the context of cultural heritage valorisation starts confronting global trends with local commitment to sustainable development. The strategic valorisation of unique cultural resources could strengthen the identity and economy of the local community, create new jobs, increase the quality of life of local residents and the pleasure of visitors, improve the image and attract investors.

The suggestion is to launch the research approach from the analysis of European examples of good practices, that could be indicated as possible models of sustainable management and valorisation of specific categories of heritage, which could at the same time enhance the process of urban regeneration and social revitalization.

The valorisation research brings up advantages of transnational cooperation in improving capacities for the sustainable use of the archaeological sites and artistic places, like cities and small villages: the oldest historic city core on the coast of the Adriatic, the Roman monuments and ruins, the islands and the legacy of the past.

By incorporating cultural heritage into the tourism, the economic significance of cultural heritage becomes equally important to its social, scientific, and political significance.

In the research process, tourism valorisation of cultural heritage includes several steps:

- 1) identification of cultural heritage;
- 2) evaluation of the tourism attractiveness sites. In this particular step, it is necessary to define clear criteria and indicators, as well as an assessment scale;
- 3) analysis and application of an appropriate model for tourism valorisation. It is important to define which kind of model is the best for the geographical area, according to the

infrastructures and the possibilities of territorial hospitality (concentrated or point model; dispersed urban model; linear thematic model; and regional networked model).

4. The European educational path for conservators and restorers

This chapter of the document summarises the group's investigation of the competencies needed to become a conservation-restoration practitioner in Europe. It expands on the definitions of conservation and restoration that already exist (E.C.C.O. 2009) and acknowledges the public conservator-restorer's role in the preservation and sharing of related information for the benefit of current and future generations.

Conservators and restorers play an essential part in preserving cultural heritage. One of the most important elements in guaranteeing its transmission to future generations is conservation and restoration.

The combination of knowledge, skill, and experience that allows a professional conservator or restorer to carry out their work in a responsible and coherent manner is known as competence. A concept map sets out the job's practical features. In order to ensure that the greatest amount of cultural significance is transmitted from the past to the future for the benefit of all audiences and in all locations, conservation-restoration is defined as a process of decision-making that involves the negotiation and management of change.

Thus, it is clear that conservation-restoration is an integral component of cultural heritage management, which deals with specifying the means of preserving cultural heritage. All stages of the decision-making process expressly acknowledge the necessity for research and documentation. These requirements confer academic authority to conservation-restoration and serve as some of its driving concepts. Manual skill is measured as an aptitude for performing conservation and restoration treatments as well as for the practical use of diagnostic techniques. It is recognised by many as a necessary precondition for professional practice.

Restoration is an evolving procedure that starts with assessment and diagnosis and progresses to direct intervention or preventive action as needed, all while taking post-treatment measures into account. This procedure is displayed as a spinal column that demonstrates an analytical advancement while always referring to the accepted ethical standards that serve as the foundation for each activity.

Following the European Qualification Framework EQF, distinguishing learning domains' between 'knowledge', 'skills' and 'autonomy and responsibility' a learning hierarchy is essential in training. .

1. *Assessment of knowledge*: upon identification of the curator-restorer's activities, each one needs to be evaluated or interpreted in terms of the knowledge content; this includes determining the quantity and kind of knowledge (factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive) that the working group acknowledges as being necessary to fulfil the duties of the profession.
2. *Skills assessment*: Every activity's necessary skill level has been determined in the same manner. The general definition of ability is excellence, facility, or dexterity that is gained or developed via education or experience. A person can be classified as basic if they can only perform fundamental duties in a complex conservation-restoration process, or intermediate if they have a higher level of ability in both breadth and depth. They possess both fundamental knowledge in their area of specialisation and advanced knowledge.
3. In the context of the EQF, *responsibility and autonomy* are described as the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility and it is structured in 8 grades scale.

5. Albanian framework in cultural heritage education

The law Nr. 27/2018 “FOR THE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE MUSEUMS” states that the Regional Centre for Conservation and Restoration, which also handles licenced individuals, oversees forming and updating the restorer's professional profile in Albania. In accordance with the provisions of the law, centres for the restoration of cultural heritages are established inside institutions that deal with cultural heritage, like the National Film Archive, National Library, National Museum of Mediaeval Art, National Museum of Fine Arts, and National Museum of Photography "Marubi". This is where future restorers can follow lifelong learning professional courses.

Actually, there isn't an exact path that can be followed by future restorers at this time. In fact, depending on the category for which the applicant is submitting his or her request, the professional abilities and/or credentials required to conservators-restorers under current legislation can differ (i.e. restorers of architectural items, or restorers of art works etc):

- a) A certain number of years of work experience in the profession cited in the diploma;
- b) Work experience in specialised institutions working on cultural heritage;
- c) Professional specialisations regarding the subcategory (held, certified or recognised by the Ministry of Culture);
- d) Authorship or co-authority in conservation project design - restoration according to the subcategory of approved according to the legislation on cultural heritage.

The Council of Ministers' decision no. 792, dated October 7, 2020, specifies that restoration professionals must hold a Master of Science degree in architecture, archaeology, or structural engineering, as well as a one-year Professional Master's degree in "Conservation and Restoration."

This one-year Professional Master Degree in Restoration is presently only offered by the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at Polytechnic University Tirana.

During this project we have been able to consider as precedent cases, two different systems of formation of restorers of cultural heritage. Taking into account the Italian example, the professions involved in the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage objects are very specialized and differ from each other. As a result of thorough analysis it was crystal clear that there is no one worldwide accepted example or system of formation for professionals dealing with the above mentioned fields, but every decision in this regards is related to the priorities set by different the countries, their financial capacities and of course it depends of the history of the country and the volume of cultural heritage objects. That is why we noticed two different systems of conservation and restoration during this project. For example in Italy we notice that due to the priority given to cultural heritage, as it is very much related to the economy of the country, after many years of discussions it was achieved to reach an agreement as regards the formation of professionals in the above mentioned field, concluding to a unique cycle of study of 5 years for the ones that were going to take care of the preservation of an immensely important issue to the Italian nation. Until now it is proclaimed that this has been a good example of how the system involved in restoration of cultural heritage could be structured in order to have a set of very well trained professionals taking care of one of the most important issues of a country. Considering the Italian example, even the Albanian government could try to open the field of formation of the professionals involved in cultural heritage to a

meticulously designed system in collaboration with higher education institutions, which could put in the disposition of education and formation of future restorer all of their specialized expertise ensured by a prestigious academic staff and all the academic infrastructural capacity. Another issue which should be bared in mind if we want a degree in this field to be recognized for the purpose of professionals being eligible to work abroad is the generally accepted composition of the study program which gives a very important percentage to practice aspects, which should compose an important part of the study program and should be comparable to the importance given to this component in other formation systems in the EU. This aspect should lead to further collaboration between institutions as regards potential need for improvement of the regulatory acts.

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