

Charter of Cultural Tourism

ICOMOS aims to encourage the safeguard and to ensure the conservation and promotion of monuments and sites - that privileged part of the human heritage.

In this capacity, it feels directly concerned by the effects - both positive and negative - on said heritage due to the extremely strong development of tourist activities in the world.

ICOMOS is conscious that today - even less than theretofore the isolated effort of any body, however powerful be it in its own sphere, cannot validly influence the course of events. This is why it has attempted to participate in joint reflection with the large world and regional organizations which in one capacity or another share in its preoccupations and which are likely to contribute to the implementation of a universal, coherent and efficacious effort.

The Representatives of these bodies, met in Brussels, Belgium, on 8 and 9 November 1976 at the International Seminar on Contemporary Tourism and Humanism have agreed the following:

BASIC POSITION

1. Tourism is an irreversible social, human, economic and cultural fact. Its influence in the sphere of monuments and sites is particularly important and can but increase because of the known conditions of that activity's development.
2. Looked at in the perspective of the next twenty-five years, in the context of the phenomena of expansion which may have heavy consequences and which confront the human race, tourism appears to be one of the phenomena likely to exert a most significant influence on Man's environment in general and on monuments and sites in particular. In order to remain bearable this influence must be carefully studied, and at all levels be the object of a concerted and effective policy. Without claiming to meet this need in all its aspects, the present approach which is limited to cultural tourism constitutes, it is believed, a positive element in the global solution which is required.
3. Cultural tourism is that form of tourism whose object is, among other aims, the discovery of monuments and sites. It exerts on these last a very positive effect insofar as it contributes - to satisfy its own ends - to their maintenance and protection. This form of tourism justifies in fact the efforts which said maintenance and protection demand of the human community because of the socio-cultural and economic benefits which they bestow on all the populations concerned.
4. Whatever, however, may be its motivations and the ensuing benefits, cultural tourism cannot be considered separately from the negative, despoiling or destructive effects which the massive and uncontrolled use of monuments and sites entails. The respect of the latter, just like the elementary wish to maintain them in a state fit to allow them to play their role as elements of touristic attraction and of cultural education, implies the definition and implementation of acceptable standards.

In any case, with the future in mind, it is the respect of the world, cultural and natural heritage which must take precedence over any other considerations however justified these may be from a social, political or economic point of view.

Such respect cannot be ensured solely by policies regarding the siting of equipment and of guidance of the tourist movements based on the limitations of use and of density which may not be disregarded without impunity.

Additionally one must condemn any siting of tourist equipment or services in contradiction with the prime preoccupation due to the respect we owe to the existing cultural heritage.

BASIS FOR ACTION

Resting on the foregoing,

- the bodies representing tourism, on the one hand, and the protection of the natural and monumental heritage, on the other, deeply convinced that the protection and promotion of the natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of the many cannot be ensured unless it be in an orderly fashion, i.e. by integrating cultural assets into the social and economic objectives which are part of planning of the resources of the states, regions and local communities,
- acknowledge with the greatest interest the measures which each of them states he is prepared to take in his own sphere of influence as expressed in the appendices to the present Declaration,
- appeal to the will of the states to ensure the fast and energetic implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted on 16 November 1972, and of the Nairobi Recommendation.
- trust that the World Tourist Organization, fulfilling its aims, and Unesco in the framework of the Convention mentioned above, shall exert all efforts in cooperation with the signatory bodies and all others who in future may rally to ensure the implementation of the policy which the signatory bodies have defined as the only one able to protect Mankind against the effects of tourism's anarchical growth which would result in the denial of its own objectives.

They express the wish that the states by the means of their administrative structures, of tourist operators' organizations, and users' associations, shall adopt all appropriate measures to facilitate the information and training of persons travelling for tourist purposes inside and out of their country of origin.

Conscious of the acute need which obtains now to change the attitude of the public at large towards the phenomena resulting from the massive development of touristic needs, they express the wish that from school age onwards children and adolescents be educated to understand and respect the monuments, the sites and the cultural heritage and that all written, spoken or visual information media should express to the public the elements of the problem thereby efficaciously contributing to effective universal understanding.

Unanimous in their concern for the protection of the cultural patrimony which is the very basis of international tourism, they undertake to help in the fight initiated on all fronts against the destruction of said heritage by all known sources of pollution; and they appeal to the architects and scientific experts of the whole world so that the most advanced resources of modern technology be used for the protection of monuments.

They recommend that the specialists who shall be called upon to conceive and implement the touristic use of the cultural and the natural heritage should receive training adapted to the multi-faceted nature of the problem, and should be associated from the outset in the programming and performance of the development and tourist equipment plans.

They solemnly declare that their action is to respect and protect the authenticity and diversity of the cultural values in developing regions and countries as in industrialized nations since the fate of Mankind's cultural heritage is of the very same nature everywhere in the face of tourism's likely expansion.
