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CULTURAL HERITAGE AND COUNCIL OF EUROPE POLICY

There is growing awareness amongst both officialdom and the general public of the need to safeguard our cultural heritage. In all countries there is an increase in the range of measures and programmes being undertaken to study cultural assets and preserve them to best advantage. In areas prone to earthquakes, particularly, the conservation and protection of cultural assets have become a prime objective.

All experience confirms that in order to encourage prompt and effective action and to minimise damage, it is important to pursue a policy of prevention based on a better understanding of how earthquakes affect not only buildings but the behaviour of resident populations. Thus, before any measures were taken in the field, we set in train an interdisciplinary consultation process aimed at pooling the experience gained in various sectors and thus assembling an integrated body of historical, scientific and technical knowledge about the architecture of earlier times.

The President of the European University Centre for Cultural Heritage in Ravello (CUEBC) called an informal meeting of those ministers from the countries of southern Europe with responsibility for the prevention of and protection against major disasters.

The ministers met in Ravello in June 1985, December 1985 and again in May 1986. At the instigation of the Turkish Government a fourth informal meeting was held in Istanbul on 8 and 9 December 1986.

The ministers concluded on that occasion that an agreement should be drawn up on cooperation in the event of major disasters. Thus the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, meeting from 16 to 20 March 1987 in Strasbourg, adopted an "Open Partial Agreement" aimed at strengthening cooperation on the prevention of, protection against and organisation of relief in major natural and technological disasters.

The activities envisaged under this Agreement are as follows:

- definition of common rules to ensure optimum deployment of European resources in the event of a disaster;
- coordination of policy on concerted information and immediate alerting of the public;
- research and training in 8 European centres;
- standardisation of terminology.

The signatories to the Agreement are France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta,

Portugal, Spain, San Marino and Turkey. WHO's Regional Office for Europe will also be taking part.

Of the 8 bodies helping to implement this Open Partial Agreement, the European University Centre for Cultural Heritage in Ravello has made a special contribution in the form of teaching and research work on the protection of cultural heritage in areas of risk as defined by the CUEBC's Scientific Coordinating Committee under Prof. Luis Mendes Victor.

The work of the CUEBC is carried out in close liaison with one of the Networks of the PACT Group (physical, chemical, biological and mathematical techniques applied to archaeology), which comprises experts in the conservation and restoration of old buildings, especially in earthquake zones, and is coordinated by Prof. Bruno Helly and the architect Patrick de Maisonneuve.

A programme has been devised which includes scientific processing, the devising of procedural instruments and case studies. It aims not only to review existing specialist knowledge but above all to facilitate its dissemination amongst the communities which use the cultural assets in need of protection.

The programme is organised as follows:

- general "theoretical" seminars to devise procedural instruments (CUEBC-NETWORK);
- activities in the field, with support from local bodies under the supervision of the NETWORK and using the instruments devised at the theoretical seminars;
- international seminars to compare experience and validate the instruments used;
- dissemination of information.

In the very first year of the programme all its phases were worked through, so it was possible to confirm that the direction of our research was the right one.

Documentation produced at the CUEBC seminar of December 1987 was amended to include data drawn from Calitri (1st case study headed by the architect Mario De Cunzo), subsequently applied to San Lorenzello with assistance from the local authority (2nd case study headed by the engineer Ferruccio Ferrigni), and then discussed and finalised at the CUEBC workshop of December 1988. It will be tested again in the 3rd case study on Paestum (Prof. Giuliana Tocco).

Thus the volume containing the material produced during this period is not an exhaustive study of the vulnerability of San Lorenzello but rather an illustration of a type of procedure in which scientific processing, the devising of procedural instruments, field testing and the dissemination of the knowledge acquired are all indissociable phases of

action to promote the policy of safeguarding cultural heritage.

This policy has already borne fruit: the Prefect of Benevento, whose responsibility includes the emergency services, has asked for the methods and instruments used in San Lorenzello to be applied to two new pilot experiments (Apice and Santa Agata dei Goti).

As a result of two research projects scheduled for 1989 and 1990 it will be possible to conduct more precise analyses and to define the rules for action more satisfactorily:

- a first project, starting in the first quarter of 1989, will cover the French and Italian faces of the southern Alps (Haute-Provence, Alpes-Maritimes, Argentera and Imperia). This will seek to analyse old buildings on the basis of the methods described above (checking, in a region which is physically homogeneous but divided by a frontier, changes in techniques which have been prompted by differing cultural, economic, historical and other realities).
- the second project will be on the Ionian island of Lefkas (Greece) and will analyse the development of traditional earthquake resistance technologies in a closed system which is short on resources.

This latter project will be carried out jointly with the European Centre on Prevention Forecasting of Earthquakes in Athens.