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Crafts and cultural heritage conservation skills

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 1851 (2008)

Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1851 \(2008\)](#) on "Crafts and cultural heritage conservation skills". It has communicated this recommendation to the governments of its member states so that they can draw on it and bring it to the attention of the bodies and players concerned and to the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP), which made the comments appended to this reply.
2. In respect of the intergovernmental co-operation for which the Council of Europe is responsible, and bearing in mind the priorities set on the occasion of the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government in May 2005, the Committee of Ministers notes that the transmission of skills to which the Assembly refers is one means of preserving in practice at grassroots level the diversity of cultural expression, and of reinforcing this.
3. The Committee of Ministers recognises the importance of the maintenance of skills and the development of techniques, occupations and trades connected with the enhancement and conservation of cultural heritage. It also notes the benefits of conservation projects as a factor in local and regional development, with the creation of jobs, industrial and economic expansion and the safeguarding and improvement of the urban and rural living environment benefiting all population groups. In this context, the Committee of Ministers welcomes the activities with an international dimension carried out by various member states, to which the Assembly refers. It also wishes to mention the work done and the projects under way in the fields in question, particularly in the context of the Regional Programme on Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe, the "Ljubljana Process" for Funding Heritage Rehabilitation in South-East Europe, European Heritage Days, with the holding on 23 September 2009 of the second European Heritage Forum, in Ljubljana, and the Kyiv Initiative.
4. With regard to the process of information exchange and consultation to which paragraph 13 of the Assembly recommendation refers, the HEREIN Network used for the implementation of the Council of Europe's heritage conventions could foster the pooling of information and the emergence of shared projects. However, bearing in mind the Organisation's budgetary constraints, the Committee of Ministers wishes to emphasise that any development along the lines set out in [Recommendation 1851 \(2008\)](#) will have to be the subject of a detailed examination in the context of the preparation of future programmes of activities.

1. adopted at the 1066th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (23 September 2009)



Appendix – Comments by the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) on Recommendation 1851 (2008)

1. The Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) has taken note with great interest of Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1851 \(2008\)](#) on “Crafts and cultural heritage conservation skills” and of the report on the subject by Baroness Hooper ([Doc. 11761](#)). It particularly welcomes the pertinence and clarity of that report, which recalls all the initiatives taken by the Council of Europe since the late 1970s, both reference texts and Committee of Ministers’ recommendations, the support given in the 1980s and 1990s to the “European Centre for the training of craftsmen in conservation of the architectural heritage” in Venice and, lastly, the reorientation of the European Foundation for Heritage Skills (FEMP), in 1995, which became the lead agency of a European network active in heritage skills.
2. The CDPATEP is more than satisfied at the information in the Assembly report on the new image of the European Centre for Heritage Crafts and Professions now housed in the Villa Fabris in Thiene (Italy) with the support of the association “Confartigianato di Vicenza”. At the same time, it regrets the discontinuation, under the circumstances referred to by the Assembly, of the services provided by the FEMP, which had facilitated a series of multinational professional collaborative efforts to pass on skills with the help of European Union programmes and co-funding mechanisms. No similar such agency to develop shared skills projects has subsequently been set up in one or more of the Organisation’s member states, despite the relevance it would have in the area of in-service training.
3. The CDPATEP shares the view expressed in [Recommendation 1851 \(2008\)](#) and by the Assembly rapporteur as to the importance of maintaining skills and of developing new competences, professions and skills in the area of heritage enhancement as a factor in local development, economic regeneration and job creation. This potential is by no means restricted to the prospects of cultural tourism and the conservation of various outstanding monuments. Consideration should be given to its true significance as a means of safeguarding and improving the urban and rural environment for the benefit of the entire population. Economic globalisation calls today for in-depth examination of the sustainable use of heritage resources in the light of serious ecological concerns and as a response to the right of people to a healthy environment. In addition to construction skills, account needs to be taken of the whole array of skills and professions associated with the built environment and the context of everyday life.
4. In terms of initiatives to be taken in the future, the CDPATEP would recommend that the text of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly report should be widely disseminated to the government departments responsible for culture, heritage, education, vocational training, the environment, small and medium-sized enterprises, and craft skills in member states as well as to appropriate NGOs. As regards intergovernmental co-operation under the aegis of the Council of Europe and the priorities of the Third Summit, the CDPATEP observes that the transmission of skills referred to by the Assembly, far from being ancillary, is a means of physically preserving a diversity of forms of cultural expression on the ground, and of strengthening them.
5. While bearing in mind that the restricted nature of the Organisation’s budgetary resources makes it difficult to put into practice the various initiatives suggested by the Parliamentary Assembly, the CDPATEP puts forward the following suggestions for closer examination on the occasion of its Bureau session at the end of 2009 and during its plenary session in 2010:
 - a. With regard to the exchange of information and concerted action recommended in paragraph 13 of the Assembly recommendation, extension of the HEREIN network used to implement Council of Europe heritage conventions could facilitate pooling of information and the emergence of shared projects. Working through that network could make it easier to establish a platform that brings together governmental public services, professional bodies and NGOs whose activities focus on training and the updating of vocational skills. Such an approach would consist of increasing awareness of needs and of fostering the creation of pilot projects to encourage advances in practice. A group of countries may also decide to come together at the 2010 plenary session of the CDPATEP to examine in greater detail during the following months the directions set out in [Recommendation 1851 \(2008\)](#);
 - b. A small working group involving the Secretariat (DGIV and the Parliamentary Assembly) and experts from the heritage sector could also be set up in 2010 to study the point raised in paragraph 10 of [Recommendation 1851 \(2008\)](#) on how to follow up the cessation of FEMP activities and the steps to be taken if its earlier input is not to be lost.