

The Faro Convention principles

INTRODUCTION

The Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (the Faro Convention) was drafted between 2003 and 2005 by a select committee of experts. It was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 13 October 2005 and opened for signature to member states in Faro, Portugal, on 27 October of the same year, entering into force on 1 June 2011. To date, 23 member states have ratified it: Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Ukraine. In addition, five states have signed the Faro Convention: Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland and San Marino.

The Faro Convention complements the other conventions related to cultural heritage adopted by the Council of Europe, from the European Cultural Convention (1954) through the Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property (Nicosia, 2017) and including the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 1985) and the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992). Its main originality is that it concerns society and proposes acting with and for society. It encourages reflection about the role of citizens in the process of defining, deciding and managing the cultural environment they live in, by asking the following question: "for what" and "for whom" should cultural heritage be enhanced? The previous conventions rather replied to the question: "how can we preserve the cultural heritage"? The Faro Convention is first and foremost a convention conceived for society and implemented by its citizens. It is one of the ways through which the Council of Europe helps its member states face societal challenges, individually or collectively. As it complements the previous Council of Europe treaties of Granada and Valletta, the Faro Convention provides answers on how to preserve the cultural heritage, proposing itself as a resource for the mobilisation of citizens in implementing public action.

The Faro Convention outlines a framework to define the role of civil society in decision making and managing processes related to the cultural heritage. Citizens' participation has become an ethical necessity as well as a political opportunity: it revitalises communities, strengthens democracy and fosters coexistence for a better quality of life.

Inherited from the past and inspiring everyday life, cultural heritage is the expression of the values, beliefs,

knowledge and traditions that experience has shaped through progress and past conflicts. Towns and territories have been nourished by continuous interaction between people and places. The common heritage provides stability and continuity to European societies.

An ever-changing world is challenging Europe: political representation is weakening, rethinking the economy has become crucial and an identity crisis threatens mutual understanding. The Faro Convention is aimed at involving civil society and heritage communities in implementing a model that enhances responsibility and self-assessment, sustainability and dialogue. Thus, the Faro Convention provides a tangible contribution to the political goals of the Council of Europe. These objectives focus on building a peaceful and democratic society and on promoting sustainable development all over Europe.

In this context, there is ample reason for the member states of the Council of Europe to ratify the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FARO CONVENTION AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The aim of the Faro Convention is to recognise the "value" for society of the historical heritage and culture, viewed as dynamic realities and as outcomes of a fruitful exchange within societies.

This convention must be a reference instrument, capable of influencing other legal instruments in member states and at the international level. In other words, this document sets out general objectives and identifies fields of action, as well as directions and paths which member states can accept as the way forward, being left with the capacity and independence to choose the means of its implementation, best suited to their constitutional organisation and political and legal traditions in place.

The Faro Convention is, therefore, not defining "enforceable rights" which would be directly applicable in the states parties, but it initiates a process of co-operation among members of the Council of Europe, inviting them to update and advance their official policies on cultural heritage for the benefit of society.

The convention goes further than other legal and political instruments and further than other conventions since the text also seeks to guard against misuse of the heritage and the risks of debasement due

to its misinterpretation as a “source of conflict”. The culture of peace and respect for differences compels a fresh understanding of cultural heritage as a factor of proximity, comprehension and dialogue.

This is the first international instrument that clearly established the concept of cultural heritage in a broad sense, in pursuance of the work by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The Faro Convention will make possible the reinforcement of official cultural policies, avoiding dualism of heritage and contemporary creation, based on partnership between government structures and civil society, taking on board the education system, scientific community and creative workers.

This new perspective requires new responsibilities for everyone. The cultural heritage, both as memory and creation, must be a new agent for a culture of peace.

THE FARO CONVENTION SPIRIT AND OBJECTIVES

The values of heritage for society

Four general principles, resulting from the Faro Convention, make possible its interpretation and highlight the priorities of the Council of Europe. These principles provide goals and guidelines through which the member states and stakeholders who are determined to implement the Faro Convention can plan their actions.


The principles proposed below do not exclude others that stakeholders may spontaneously come up with when tapping into the abundance of ideas to be found in the Faro Convention to respond to their specific needs. The Council of Europe has been focusing on these principles to promote the convention, support activities in the member states and measure their impact.

Main principles for understanding the Faro Convention



M

Managing cultural diversity and mutual understanding



I

Improving the living environment and the quality of life



E

Enhancing more cohesive societies



D

Developing democratic participation and social responsibility

Managing cultural diversity and mutual understanding

Public authorities and civil society organisations are encouraged to pursue cultural heritage policies that facilitate coexistence among different communities. Heritage stands as a resource for conciliation of different values, by promoting trust, mutual understanding and co-operation with a view to contributing to local development and preventing possible conflicts.

Improving the living environment and the quality of life

The convention promotes an integrated approach, combining initiatives related to cultural identity, natural landscape and biological ecosystems. Parties to the convention should aim at reinforcing people's sense of belonging by fostering shared responsibility towards the common environment they live in.

Enhancing more cohesive societies

Public and private actors should work to raise awareness of the economic potential of cultural heritage, carrying out practices aimed at its protection and responsible management, considering the principles of sustainability, efficiency and social cohesion.

Developing democratic participation and social responsibility

The Faro Convention creates space for discussion and debate with the aim of identifying shared values and priorities around heritage and promoting cultural heritage initiatives. For this to happen, it is of crucial importance to involve voluntary organisations or non-governmental bodies and provide opportunities for the participation of young people, by means of education and research.

THE FARO ACTION PLAN AND THE FARO METHOD

The Faro Convention Action Plan is intended to translate the [Faro Convention](#) principles into practice. It aims to illustrate the richness and novelty of the principles of the Faro Convention, as well as provide possibilities for their interpretation in relation to current societal challenges.

The Faro Action Plan has the following goals:

- ▶ to provide field-based knowledge and expertise for member states to better understand the potential of the convention and fully apply it;
- ▶ to help the Council of Europe to highlight and study specific cases in line with the political priorities of the Organisation;
- ▶ to offer a platform for analysis and recommendations for further action in line with the Faro Convention's principles;
- ▶ to encourage member states to sign and ratify the convention.

The following benchmarks and criteria were drawn up to ensure the alignment of activities with the Faro Convention.

Benchmarks

- ▶ Connection to the community and landscape determines a sense of belonging.
- ▶ Social cohesion is founded on various forms of participation and commitment.
- ▶ Local democracy is reinforced by developing civil society's capacities for action.

Criteria

- ▶ Presence of an active civil society that has a common interest in a specific heritage.
- ▶ Emergence of a consensus on an expanded common vision of heritage.
- ▶ Existence of a mainstream perception of a defined territory.
- ▶ Readiness of the group to engage in the process of developing narratives based on people and territory.
- ▶ Presence of people who can convey the message.
- ▶ Engaged and supportive political players.
- ▶ Consideration of an alternative local economic model.
- ▶ A willingness of local authorities and civil society to co-operate.
- ▶ Openness to consider civic action as an empowering act for democracy for all parties involved.

A distinctive approach

Based on the Council of Europe's ongoing reflection, the Faro Convention draws on three main ideas, which were incorporated as hallmarks of the working methodology:

- ▶ prioritising residents in their relationship with cultural heritage;
- ▶ reaching out to heritage communities;
- ▶ strengthening linkages between all local, regional and national heritage actors, through synergetic action.

The reflection gives priority to an action-research approach. It offers a platform for dialogue, seeking heritage-led alternative solutions to the increasingly complex societal challenges of our times. It also seeks to include the various distinctive civic initiatives carried out at local level and to draw on these specific experiences. This approach thus allows for a better consideration of contributions from the field (a "bottom-up" approach) to provide input for the development of common references to all member states.

Heritage and democracy

The Council of Europe's work on the Faro Convention has been supported and encouraged by the European Union, with the convention increasingly referred to in its official documents. Concrete examples of civil initiatives that draw on the Faro principles, and their capacity to propose practical solutions to community participation issues, play an essential role in addressing today's complex socio-economic issues. The evolving methodology around the Faro Convention encourages this process to move forward, based primarily on field experience and working with all layers of society. An increased number of signatories of the convention will further encourage the European institutions to listen to the communities and be aware of their active role in the development of innovative approaches towards heritage and democratisation processes. The Council of Europe, through the Faro Convention, continues to play a crucial role in launching and guiding a pan-European debate on societal challenges as related to human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Heritage communities

Heritage communities are self-organised, self-managed groups of individuals who are interested in the progressive social transformation of relations between people, places and stories, with an inclusive approach based on an enhanced definition of heritage.

Heritage communities go beyond the classic concept of heritage experts, putting the community at the centre of heritage work in a renewed democratic framework. Considering heritage as a resource, they work towards direct democratic engagement in

support of diversity and sustainable development, seeking favourable economic and social conditions for the survival and well-being of diverse communities. With their community-based initiatives and distinctive approach, which involves working through the different layers of society, heritage communities create a platform to revisit and redefine relationships to address the societal challenges faced in Europe today.

As a manifestation of synergies between heritage and diversity with a constructive approach, heritage communities are actively searching for alternative solutions to societal challenges.

The Council of Europe, with an enlarged and cross-disciplinary approach to cultural heritage and diversity, encourages heritage communities to assert the principle of every person's right of access to the cultural heritage of their choice, while respecting the rights and freedoms of others.

A common reference framework for understanding the scope of the Faro Convention

When working with heritage communities that are interested in progressive social transformation of the relations between people, places and stories with an inclusive approach and enhanced definition of heritage, three main concepts are put forward for the implementation of the Faro Convention: participation, common assets and narratives.

- ▶ A desire for the participation of individuals and collective bodies that are prepared to engage in public action for the general well-being:

If not perceived and applied organically, the concept of participation could become artificial, if it is merely instituted in the framework of public policy and official regulation, without the basic democratic provisions being respected. In these situations, the participatory process loses its essence, generating a refusal to take part by some groups or communities – as well as disregard or superficial assimilation. This delicate process should be acknowledged by all sectors of society, especially civil society and public institutions, and should not be taken for granted. In these contexts, concerted application of the principles of the Faro Convention by public institutions and civil society presents new forms of participation by

the heritage communities in local governance. This reshapes and renews the nature of relations between political actors, public institutions and heritage communities, encouraging ownership of public action for the common good.

- ▶ Identification and preservation of one or more of the common assets around which communities are structured:

The common assets are a product of human activity sharing: they are first and foremost what sustains coexistence between people. The main principle of the common asset is the guarantee for everyone to be able to enjoy relational well-being and lead a peaceful coexistence with others. This definition of the common asset is fundamental for the commitment of all heritage communities. The Faro Convention encourages a direct relation between common assets and democracy, which enriches public life and participation. Through heritage communities, these significant places, unique practices and traditions are rediscovered or revealed and brought to public attention.

- ▶ The difficulties that some communities experience in bringing out a collective contemporary narrative, in view of the challenges of diversity, migration and various other issues:

People's narratives, life stories, territorial tales, migration stories, celebrations, unique stories about heritage groups or emblematic places nurture different elements of heritage communities. These narratives, and the way they are revealed and disseminated, make up an important part of the extraordinary wealth of our shared history in Europe. Acknowledgement that there is more than one story to any issue, regardless of whether we agree with it or not, and having the opportunity to be heard are fundamental to the question of narratives. This allows the inhabitants themselves to take possession of places and of their history. These narratives connect the recent and more distant past to what constitutes the present. They give direction and allow for cohesion among individuals, groups and institutions, offering representations that can be compared, shared and accepted. They create a platform for greater mutual understanding and dialogue for potential future joint actions.

The Faro Convention Network

PRINCIPLES

The Faro Convention acknowledges and promotes the different internal dynamics and multiple identities of each society, defined through meanings attributed to its cultural heritage. It acknowledges that diversity of people, places and their stories are essential to the positive interaction between and within societies as well as with their surroundings.

The Faro Convention Network (FCN) is conceived as a self-managed, dynamic and transformative platform with its members freely associated and guided by principles and criteria based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The FCN consists of groups of practitioners and facilitators of heritage-led and people-centred actions in towns and territories in the Council of Europe member states and non-member states, who go through a process of valuing their local heritage assets in line with the principles and criteria of the Faro Convention. The network is made up of a growing number of local communities participating in a dynamic pan-European

platform, offering extensive knowledge, expertise and tools, within a framework for constructive dialogue and co-operation.

The Faro Network works on identifying good practices and practitioners, conducts workshops and supports members' efforts in addressing challenges related to the field of heritage. Furthermore, it aims at demonstrating the role of heritage in addressing the societal challenges that are being faced today.

FARO PRINCIPLES USED FOR EVALUATION

The following principles sustaining the Faro Convention can be used to analyse the various initiatives presented in the following pages and illustrate to what extent they are already in line with them or can further develop them. As the evaluation process is dynamic, the fact that a certain initiative is not fully in accordance with a specific principle of the Faro Convention is not viewed as an exclusion criterion, but rather as an opportunity to develop in the future.

A MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Determine the public interest in heritage to stimulate the right investment for preserving and enhancing the social and economic value of the different kinds of heritage.
- 2 Promote conciliation and reconciliation to bring together within a community the stakeholders who are defending divergent interests, and to allow dialogue to become one of the main forces for sustainable development.

B IMPROVING THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE

- 1 Encourage a high quality architectural and urban design enriched by the cultural diversity of the territories and their traditions.
- 2 Bring together the objectives related to economic efficiency, social cohesion and ecological balance within heritage-led strategies that allow for the combined action of public authorities, investors and civil society.

C ENHANCING MORE COHESIVE SOCIETIES

- 1 Implement "shared responsibility" involving civil society in a mechanism integrated with public action to identify values, define priorities and manage heritage-led projects.

D DEVELOPING DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 1 Encourage a sense of responsibility in all social stakeholders so that they act on the basis of a feeling of belonging to a community which is enriched by their diversity.

THE FARO CONVENTION NETWORK MEMBERS

The Faro Initiatives are an essential part of the Faro Convention Network. They consist of groups of practitioners and facilitators of heritage-led and people-centred actions in towns and territories in the Council of Europe member states and non-member states, which go through a process of re-evaluating their local heritage assets in line with the principles and criteria of the Faro Convention. The Faro Convention Network is made up of a growing number of local communities participating in a dynamic pan-European platform, offering extensive knowledge, expertise and tools, within a framework for constructive dialogue and co-operation.

The network works towards identifying good practices and practitioners, conducts workshops and supports members' efforts in addressing societal challenges related to the field of heritage. It is conceived as a self-managed, dynamic and transformative platform with its members freely associated with and guided by the principles and criteria based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

European Faro projects that have already been carried out illustrate the implementation of the convention. This publication aims to highlight the fundamental objectives of the convention: civil society involvement, active participation of the general public, protection and preservation of cultural heritage as common responsibility, concrete and specific relation of heritage with daily life, awareness of belonging to a community, local relevance, improving the quality of life through cultural heritage, raising awareness of cultural heritage among young people through the education system and making innovative use of cultural heritage. The selected examples in this publication present the best practices at the European level and can be taken as stimulation and motivation for similar projects. They may allow exchange of experience and show opportunities and obstacles for their use as exemplary activities under the Faro Action Plan.

VISCRI, ROMANIA – THE WHOLE VILLAGE PROJECT

Economic valuation, integration and preservation of rural heritage



- ▶ Political development
- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Social development
- ▶ Technological development
- ▶ Legal development
- ▶ Environmental development

Contacts and links

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In a nutshell

The mass departure of Saxons to Germany between 1990 and 1995 emptied the village of Viscri of 80% of its population and leaving the Roma¹ as the major-

ity population. With the help of the Mihai Eminescu Trust, Carolina Fernolend, from the Saxon community, launched an initiative, with the aim of preserving the Saxon heritage and turning it into a resource, enabling the Roma and all community members of Viscri to make the best use of it.

Some 20 years later, her idea was proved to be successful, with only two out of 147 Roma families from Viscri still dependent on social welfare and all the young population accessing education. The initiative focuses on turning the Saxon cultural heritage into an economic asset through offering to visitors bed and breakfasts, tourist itineraries and craft and

1. The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

vegetable-growing activities, aimed at improving the inhabitants' quality of life and living conditions.

Besides the various associations stemming from this experience of village community co-operation, public investment has been geared to general well-being, a few examples being the creation of an environmentally friendly waste water system, access to a running water supply and the shared use of municipal land. This approach has made it possible to give impetus to collective action and credibility in the eyes of the public authorities. The motive of "coexistence" as a common asset shared by all the villagers is a particularly good illustration of one of the Faro Convention's principles.



Viscri today

Viscri is a village belonging to the municipality of Bunești in Brașov County, Transylvania, Romania. It is a remote village, located between the road connecting Brașov to Sighișoara and the road that connects Rupea to Mediaș. Despite its isolation, this village boasts one of the most spectacular fortified churches in Transylvania, built around 1100, and designated in 1999 as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Viscri's population is now of Roma majority, with a few Romanians and about 20 Saxons. People still live from their farming and animal husbandry, although the development of tourism has introduced a recent activity in the village. Many people are now transforming their traditional authentic Saxon houses into beautiful and welcoming guest houses.

Historical background

It is essential to have a historical detour on the presence of the "Saxons" in Viscri and, more generally, in Transylvania until 1990 to understand the village's environment.

Invited 800 years ago by King Geza II to defend the borders of Transylvania against the invaders, initial settlers from Luxembourg and the Moselle region contributed to developing the economy of the region and immigration continued and extended the Saxon area further to the east.

During the Second World War, many Transylvanian Saxons were recruited by the Wehrmacht to fight against the Soviet Union and when Romania changed its alliance in 1944 and declared war on the Axis, the German army initiated the withdrawal of Saxons from Transylvania and 100 000 others escaped from the Red Army, as many of them were accused of "collaboration with the Nazis" and sent to Siberian labour camps. After the war, Romania did not expel the remaining Saxons even if the communist regime persecuted

them and they lost all their property. Following the end of the Ceaucescu era, emigration to Germany increased until 1995 to reach 100 000 persons, but about 20 000 Saxons and in total about 40 000 from the German minority still reside in Romania.

Before the Second World War, the base of the economy was essentially agriculture. The Roma worked for the Saxon farmers who owned the land. To keep large estates, the lands were passed on to the elder sons, while the other sons worked as carpenters, masons and craftsmen. Around 600 Saxons lived in Viscri, where different communities lived separately and practised different religions.

With the arrival of communism, the lands were nationalised and half of the population still present became agricultural wage earners of the state, while the other half worked in kolkhozes. At the end of communism, those who remained took back their lands and their tools; however, large farms disappeared due to the lack of a workforce to keep them running. The result was the scattering of small plots where only an organic gardening market could produce value, and where the Roma that became owners did not necessarily have the know-how of the Saxons.

During the massive departure of the Saxons to Germany from 1990 to 1995, the village of Viscri was emptied, with 80% of its population gone. The Roma community, already present in the village for a long time as a minority, became the majority with a massive influx of the Roma population living outside the village.



Actors

The initiator was the Mihai Eminescu Trust (MET), named after Romania's prominent poet of the 20th century and founded in 1987 in London. Its initial activity developed slowly, due to the inauspicious political context of the times. The initial purpose of the organisation was introducing Romanian intellectuals (philosophers, writers, artists, etc.) to Western European universities (especially Oxford and Cambridge) and to the influential personalities of the Western world. The principal objective of the charity was to promote education, culture, religion and academic research within Romania. The main activity was providing grants (financial, educational, material and promotional) to individuals and organisations in Romania.

One of the first major initiatives of the Mihai Eminescu Trust was a reaction to Ceausescu's systemising plan which endangered thousands of historically important Romanian villages. In this context, the foundation was supported by His Royal Highness (HRH) the Prince