



**ATFORT Interreg IVC POSITION PAPER
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EUROPEAN ACTIONS
EFFORTS 2018**

A framework for the safeguarding of fortification heritage should be envisaged, at least to establish the basis for appropriate regeneration and maintenance mechanisms in the future.

EU programming should acknowledge the multi-sectoral characteristics of fortified heritage, dedicating explicit and specific reference to the applications on these sites as a pilot for EU development. In this respect, specific measures should be taken in the field of legislation, funding/financing and training:

A. EU legislation Specific attention must be given within European institutions to highlight the impact that European legislation has on historical sites. It is particularly important to ensure that the application of European directives for the management of historical sites (those related to habitat, air quality, water, waste, energy and noise pollution) are covered.

In this respect, the following main issues should be further investigated and regulated:

1. The privatization process of cultural heritage should favour the takeover of communities first, offering new eligible management structures.
2. The preservation and maintenance objectives and procedures should be given a theoretical and practical common base, with specific reference to the peculiarities of fortifications.
3. Fortified Heritage, due to its extension and critical status, should be considered a territorial priority, allowing flexibility in interventions (with reference to monumental and landscape bonds) and promoting integration within regional and local policy and strategic documents.
4. The operators working on fortified heritage should be properly certified according to a European standard. This action should include the improvement of training and practice.

B. EU Programming and funding

The sharing of experiences enabled partners to understand that they have similar problems and similar approaches, but further actions need to be taken. The partnership highlighted the fact that funding in different forms is needed, in particular:

1. Upcoming anniversaries of historical events should also be included in measures towards the recovery and regeneration of Modern fortifications as places of war and peace as well as tangible EU heritage. Specific and consistent funds in different measures should be allocated to the sustainable preservation of fortifications.
2. EU programming should raise attention to various forms of active participation by the EU population. The programme should include the unemployed, volunteers etc in activities that safeguarding cultural heritage and landscape, as tools for alternative funding. Education is a resource dedication will be required.
3. EU governance policies should aim at maximising sustainable infrastructural objectives to facilitate the redevelopment of dismissed heritage areas, as well as promote the coordination of inter-sectoral projects through explicit funding calls.

C. Research and Training

The knowledge acquired on European fortresses and fortifications have reached an advanced state through different European Cooperation initiatives. This expertise needs to be enhanced, monitored, organised and communicated through efficient learning experiences:

- The promotion of awareness raising initiatives in the general public targets the creation of values;
- Training professionals able to support fortresses' owners to adopt the right decisions on restoration and management issues, in line with the international standards and latest achievements;
- Coordinated research activities aiming at a systematic organisation of valuable existing researches, data and field experiences;
- To facilitate the adoption of European dismissed fortification for the testing and application of innovative and sustainable solutions for heritage and landscape preservation, as showed by the ATFORT partners during the ateliers.

In this light, it is advised that the EU support the ATFORT initiative to establish an International Centre for the Research and Valorisation of Fortified Heritage to be located in Forte Marghera, Venice, as the starting initiative for future cooperation in this field.

Exchange at all levels is the basis for the creation of a real European identity in respect to cultural and historic diversities.

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AT FORT

Atelier European Fortresses

The AT FORT project aims to exchange knowledge between the eleven partners and other fortress specialists. The AT FORT PARTNERSHIP includes 11 partners, who are local and regional authorities, public bodies and knowledge institutes with experience in the field of cultural heritage utilization.

21st century needs

Fortified heritage sites and their surrounding landscapes built between the 16th and 20th centuries represent a considerable cultural value in Europe.

The majority of these sites (particularly the partners' sites) are situated close to urbanised areas, and thus represent a great potential for accomplishing socio-economic regional development goals. Although nowadays the surrounding urbanised territories are increasingly "conquered" by the development of new and modern constructions, there are several assets that haven't been tapped, representing great potential for increasing attractiveness of towns and regions.

The re-use and exploitation of renovated and revitalised fortresses, should be organised in accordance with the needs of the 21st century. These new economic functions will generate resources for future maintenance of the cultural values of these sites.

Conservation through development

However, the "Conservation through development" concept (the motto of the Dutch Belvedere principle),

which this project wishes to adopt, requires a cyclic thinking and a coordinated, integrated and systematic approach.

In order to maintain these cultural values and to make these fortified heritage sites real drivers of regional sustainable development, public bodies responsible for their operation, maintenance and exploitation must find solutions to the following problems and/or challenges:

1. In order to have the means and resources to preserve assets (in the midst of decreasing public budgets) the exploitation of new economic functions (congress/event facilities, recreational activities, visitor centres, etc.) is indispensable. This offers the potential for socio-economic growth (new jobs, social employment, increase in regional revenues), opening a wide variety of possibilities for multifunctional use. The identification of best possible exploitation scenarios and creation of feasible development plans a thorough analysis of the already existing examples.

2. There are important enabling conditions that need to be fulfilled and taken into consideration when creating new functions for a protected heritage site. Ecology (i.e. vegetation and bats), the use of renewable energies, accessibility, architecture- and restoration techniques, along with planning and landscaping are some of the most important factors that need to be considered. When dealing with these aspects, bodies responsible for the sites often face conflicting policy or legislation (e.g. heritage protection vs. nature conservation or modern acclimatisation). By investigating good practices regarding enabling conditions, joint recommendations should be created to solve these conflicts and make regional/national/EU legislation sympathetic to redevelopment.

3. The management of fortified heritage sites calls for enhanced governance models. Legal, organizational and branding aspects have to be rethought and innovation in financing models using good examples of PPP (which is a key for the management of these sites) is required.

Better governance requires smart vertical and horizontal cooperation schemes which have to be adapted to the very specific character of the sites, in line with the “Conservation through development” approach.

Questions

The importance of fortified heritage sites necessitates specialists and there are of course many challenges and questions which remain unanswered. In 2009 the New Dutch Waterline organised a European conference tackling issues such as innovative redevelopment techniques and ecology (presence of bats and vegetation within the fortified heritage sites habitat). Experts from 13 European countries attended the conference, keen to exchange experience and knowledge on these specific topics, but of course many questions have not yet been answered given that they need in-depth and intensive cooperation and research.

Partners

The partners that were invited to join the At Fort partnership, were selected on the basis of their specific know-how and experience, their geographic location and their capacity to directly influence policies and decision making processes at local and/or regional level.

Experiences of partners

Partners have a wealth of experience in introducing new economic functions and in several aspects of the enabling conditions, as well as effective governance, financing and branding models and believe that putting the pieces of the puzzle together will help to find workable and sustainable solutions for all partner regions.