

Joint Statement from the International Symposium organized by NGO SUBURBIUM in Novi Sad, May 2-4, 2007, in the premises of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

CULTURAL/ARCHITECTUAL HERITAGE RENEWAL - ASPECTS, EXAMPLES, LESSONS -

CULTURAL/ARCHITECTUAL HERITAGE is an expression of the civilization level of each state and its protection and renewal is the duty of authorities, different profile experts (professionals in the field of protection of monuments, architects, historians, art historians, archeologists, civil engineers, technologist, sociologist, specific scientists) and citizens. Participants of the International Symposium CULTURAL/ARCHITECTUAL HERITAGE RENEWAL - ASPECTS, EXAMPLES, LESSONS, from Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Austria and Serbia, respecting the institution which has offered the hospitality to the Symposium, point to a significance of such interdisciplinary meetings and an exchange of knowledge and experience among experts from Middle and Southeastern Europe, whose precious experience in the field of the architectural heritage protection could be a path and a way to avoid potential mistakes, and hand out the public appeal:

“A particular risk for countries in the process of transition - in addition to an insufficient actions of authorities and lack of financial resources from budget and public funds – represent uncontrolled influence of private assets on objects and field theatres, which are true national heritage and precious public places. General “no action” behavior, particularly from expert sectors, would be a sign that even we, closely linked to the action and work in the field of heritage renewal and protection, are reconciled with the situation when money dictates all.

We, also, point to the alarming condition of The Petrovaradin Fortress with its Lower Town, as a cultural and historic monument from XVIII century, which during recent decades was fundamentally damaged and ignored. We demand that, in the framework of all future steps, experts are consulted, in order to evade further damages of any sort.

The Lower Town of the Petrovaradin Fortress has no precisely established link with the Upper Town. This is challenge for common projects to be materialized jointly by experts, citizens and authorities, with particular accent that the Lower Town, as a civic settlement compared to the Upper town, should be essentially protected. Therefore, we propose possible fields of activities:

- tutorial lessons about experiences from similar places in the region
- workshops with the local population to discover real values of their own environment
- voluntary working camps (face-lifting of squares and streets; planting greenery; renewal of inner yards; cleaning Danube shores)

We strongly wish that this very first step in our cooperation will be continued through regular exchange of various experiences and the yearly meetings (or each two years), to review in advance agreed topics and to offer our assumptions and conclusions to different local communities, in particular to those in Southeastern European region, of which Voivodina, the Autonomous Province of Serbia, belongs.

“Suburbium” and participants of the Symposium wish that Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina hosts SEE Heritage Network, already created in the region of South East Europe and supported by the Swedish organisation Cultural Heritage without Borders leadership.

Novi Sad, July 2007.