

# From the Venice Charter of 1964 to the Venice Appeal for a renewed urban culture

## Da Carta de Veneza de 1964 ao Apelo de Veneza por uma cultura urbana renovada

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### Abstract

The 1964 Venice Charter contains very clear articles about the objectives of including aspects of the context of the main monuments in the scope of protection. After more than 50 years of work on the restoration, education, and valorisation of the city, the International Private Committee for the Safeguarding of Venice drew up, with the participation of various institutions and scholars, the *Proposal for a Venice Charter for Urban Culture*. The initiative originated in Venice, an exemplary case for questioning the future of cities, given the many challenges its preservation entails. The lagoon city emblematically represents the value of historical European cities to be protected not only for historical-artistic elements but also for socio-economic aspects, as a place marked by cultural diversity, individual and community wellbeing, social justice and cohesion, and a differentiated, sustainable, and efficient economy, integrating the approach of only material conservation of cultural heritage.

### Resumo

A Carta de Veneza de 1964 contém artigos muito claros sobre os objetivos para incluir aspetos do contexto dos principais monumentos no âmbito da proteção. Após mais de 50 anos de trabalho em restauro, educação e valorização da cidade, o Comité Internacional Privado para a Salvaguarda de Veneza elaborou, com a participação de várias instituições e académicos, a *Proposta para uma Carta de Veneza para a Cultura Urbana*. A iniciativa teve origem em Veneza, um caso exemplar para questionar o futuro das cidades, dados os muitos desafios que a sua preservação implica. A cidade lacustre representa emblematicamente o valor das cidades históricas europeias a serem protegidas não só pelos seus elementos histórico-artísticos, mas também pelos seus aspetos socioeconómicos, como um local marcado pela diversidade cultural, pelo bem-estar individual e comunitário, pela justiça social e coesão, e por uma economia diferenciada, sustentável e eficiente, integrando a abordagem da conservação apenas material do património cultural.

### KEYWORDS

Cultural heritage  
Historic city management  
UNESCO sites  
Venice  
Over tourism

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Património cultural  
Gestão de cidades  
históricas  
Sítios da UNESCO  
Veneza  
Excesso de turismo

## Introduction

As we can easily guess from a view from the bell towers of the ancient city of Venice, shown in [Figure 1](#), exactly the same view that Jacopo De Barbari saw in 1500, which then gave rise to his bird's-eye view of the city,

*Venice is the historical work of an entire community in which every construction mobilized a plurality of skills, responsibilities, performances, that is, of men, within the city and the State, and in the continental countries across the sea: a plurality that appears envisaged and regulated by laws and decrees, organized by schools and guilds, prepared by drawings and surveys, acknowledged by letters and expense notes, and finally enhanced by an iconography that lovingly describes the many workers engaged in the most diverse jobs of the construction site of each yet simple building [1].*

As Paolo Maretto, an important scholar of historic buildings in Venice, explains, the lagoon city and its stones can be the subject of multiple narratives and meanings, representing an exceptional field of study and experimentation. Other authors have also focused attention on choral values of diffuse architecture, such as Egle Renata Trincato [2], famous for her unsurpassed 1948 study *Venezia minore*, and Roberto Pane [3], who was among the drafters of the 1964 Venice Charter, and formulated the concept of "architectural literature," extending to his discipline the Benedetto Croce's categories [4] of poetry and literature and laying the groundwork for the broadening of protection from the isolated monument to the environmental whole.



**Figure 1.** View of Venice from San Moisè bell tower, 2021 (photo: Francesco Trovò).



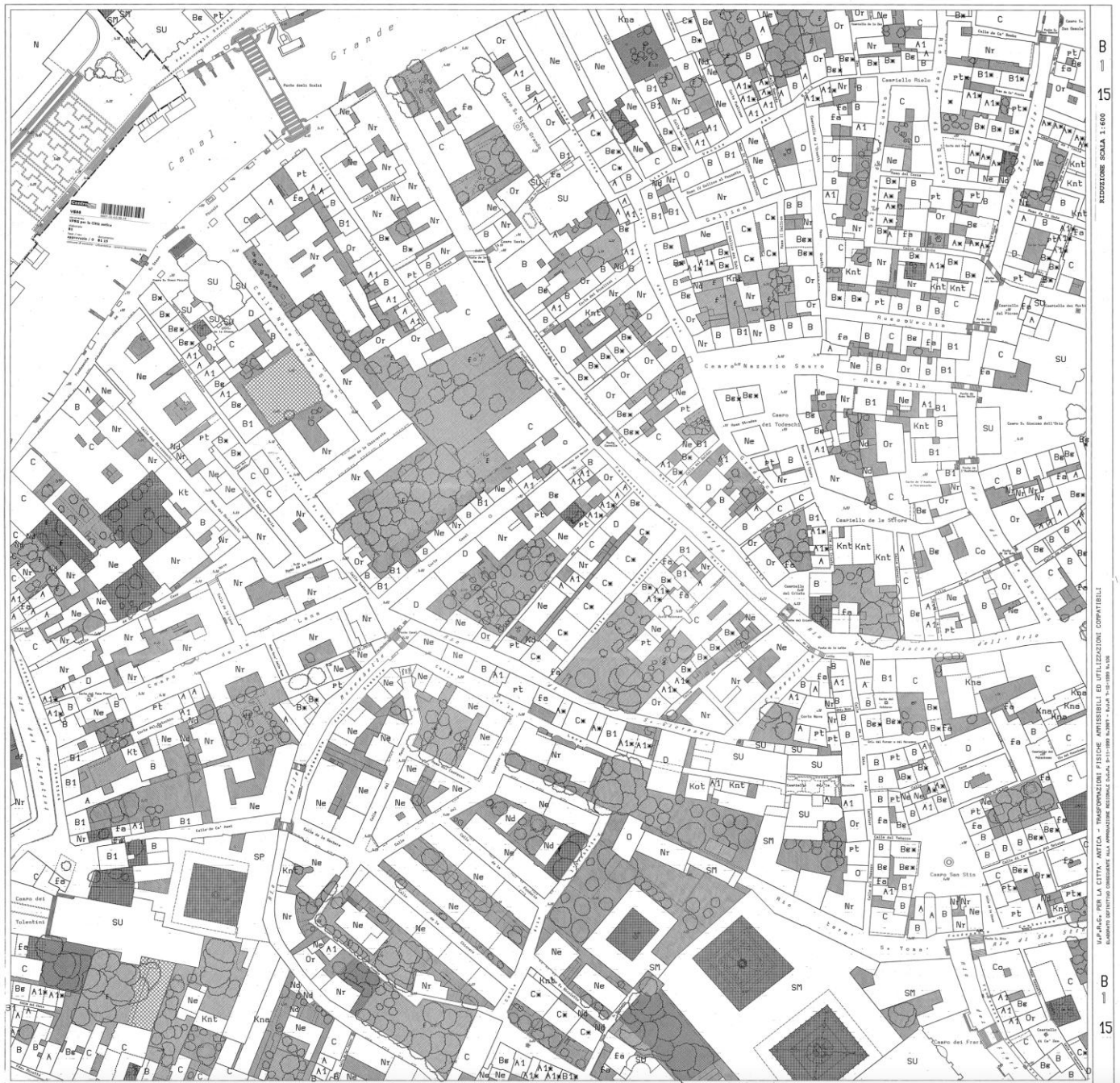
**Figure 2.** View of Venice St. Mark square: *a*) after Aqua Granda with a level of 194 cm s.m.m., 1966; *b*) similar position the day after the second highest tide ever recorded, which reached 187 cm. The MOSE will be activated next year, 2019 (photo: Francesco Trovò).

These principles can be found, in the 1964 Charter, where, in particular we find both the foundations for a widespread and extended safeguard not only of the pieces of courtly architecture, but also of the connective pieces of fabric, which substantiate the aims of value recognition and protection of the historic urban passage, and the objectives of restoration intervention, which summarize the achievements of a tradition on the still immature discipline that will find full development in the following decades.

In addition to initiating a process of raising awareness about the fate of Venice, the 1966 flood, known as the *Aqua Granda*, of which an iconic image is shown in [Figure 2](#), unexpectedly repeated itself in 2019 ([Figure 3](#)), was instrumental in securing the attention of the Italian State to the city, which defined Venice as a problem of preeminent national interest, and enacted a series of Special Laws for Venice [5], through which legislative and economic support was secured for the achievement of goals to protect the city and support its citizens.

Special legislation has been responsible for conferring coordination related to the objectives and measures of protection, providing the economic tools to operate, and Law 798/84 [6-8] has allowed for considerable spending availability.

In 1987 Venice was inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites, based on all six cultural selection criteria (I-VI) for the exceptional nature of its cultural values, consisting of a historical, archaeological, urban, architectural, artistic heritage, and cultural traditions, integrated in an equally extraordinary environmental, natural, and landscape context [9-10].



**Figure 3.** Municipality of Venice. PRG Variant for the Ancient City. Each building unit is classified according to typological criteria.

In 1999, with a serious delay, the PRG Variant for the Ancient City was approved [11], the approach of which would complement the already established protective action exercised by the local Superintendency. **Figure 3** shows an extract from the municipal plan, in which the classifications of each building unit according to typological criteria are visible, while **Figure 4** shows the area of the city of Venice and its lagoon subject to the protection provisions of the state law, which covers an area of 550 square kilometers of the landscape.

In this context, the preservation of the city and the related means of preserving it assumed centrality. During this period from 1966 to the first decade of the 2000s, interventions on historic buildings were numerous and frequent. The 1964 Charter certainly had a positive role in directing interventions on cultural heritage, but at the same time, was less effective on interventions of the connective building fabric.



**Figure 4.** Ministry of Culture, Municipality of Venice and its Lagoon, Superintendency. Map showing the landscape protection area corresponding to the entire Venice Lagoon.

### Protecting Venice from 1966 to the present: the role of Private Committees

If upstream of the drafting of the Venice Charter stand twenty years of field work, debates, confrontations, failures, and victories in the immense undertaking to rebuild the European cultural heritage deeply wounded by the two world wars that followed in the first half of the twentieth century, immediately downstream of its dissemination lies a very serious environmental disaster that, despite repeated historical precedents, was perceived as exceptional and in which the warnings of the climate change that would emerge in all its severity only in the following decades were not read.

In the first days of November 1966, the flooding of the Arno River in Florence and the *Acqua Granda* in Venice jeopardized the very survival of two cities symbolic in the world of the entire continent, Florence and Venice, and, arousing deep emotion, attracted international attention (especially, in truth, towards the former). The director of UNESCO then made a poignant appeal to the solidarity of the 120 member states of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the cultural and research institutes, and invited writers, artists, musicians, historians and critics, all those «and they are legions» he said, «whose works have been inspired by the treasures of Florence and Venice» to donate a part of what they had received, knowing fully well that they could never settle their spiritual debt.

One of the most important results of the UNESCO Campaign is the founding of the International Private Committees for the Safeguarding of Venice. René Maheu's invitation was, in fact, promptly taken up by personalities linked for different reasons to our country; among the first, a monument man like Colonel James A. Gray, founder of what was to become the *World Monument Fund* and, like Piero Gazzola, involved in the rescue of the Nubian temples, and Ashley Clarke, British ambassador to Italy from 1953 to 1962. They established an extraordinary harmony with Francesco Valcanover, since 1966 *Soprintendente alle Gallerie e alle opere d'arte per le province di Venezia, Belluno, Padova, Rovigo, Treviso, Vicenza*, who on the one hand was able to set up and manage vast construction sites with extraordinary vision and energy and on the other was able to cultivate and enhance these international relations.



**Figure 5.** One of the Association's most recent interventions concerned the restoration of Canova's cenotaph in the Frari Basilica (funding committee Venice in Peril Fund).

Thus, 53 committees from 12 nations (Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA) were established within a short period of time: raising funds, mostly private, in their countries, and not interrupting their action, over a period of almost sixty years the Committees have carried out no less than 2,000 restorations, with an approximate value of about 300 million euro. They have financed and continue to finance not only restorations of entire buildings or individual works of art, but also studies, research, interventions in the archival field, academic publications, exhibitions, museum layouts, and educational and training initiatives. [Figure 5](#) shows one of the monuments recently restored thanks to the support of the International Committees for the Safeguarding of Venice: Canova's tomb inside the Basilica dei Frari.

Until 2016 the Private Committees operated together with UNESCO, since 1987 through the Association that brings them together with the primary purpose of facilitating that relationship and that with the Superintendencies, while since 2017, having ceased their formal relationship with the international body, they have been acting on the basis of an agreement with the Ministry of Culture, which recognizes and encourages their work with respect to public heritage or that usable by the public.

There are now 26 active Committees from 11 nations (gone are from Belgium and Japan; from Austria and Russia have joined) and they carry out dozens of projects worth several million euros each year. In addition to its economic size, the work of the International Private Committees for the Safeguard of Venice has other characteristics, equally, if not more important: the timeliness, the benefits of which clearly emerged in the aftermath of the high water of 2019; the flexibility which, combined with the expertise of the Superintendencies and professionals, has resulted in exemplary achievements, capable of guiding subsequent developments as well, especially in the field of restoration; the work it provides to researchers,

artisans and specialized firms; fidelity, an expression of the bond and commitment that the whole world has to Venice and a manifestation of that very large international segment of the enlarged 'heritage community' which, as enshrined in the Faro Convention, has the right to enjoy such a common heritage and at the same time the duty to be responsible for it, regardless of belonging.

As noted in the "Pietro Torta for the restoration of Venice" Award (edition 2023), established in 1974 by the Ateneo Veneto in memory of engineer Pietro Torta (1896-1973), a passionate enthusiast of the restoration of the architectural heritage of the lagoon city, member of the Ateneo Veneto and for many years President of the Order of Engineers of Venice, [12], the Private Committees have worked humbly, although proudly, grateful for the opportunity offered to them by the State and the City to offer their contribution to the common goal of safeguarding, always keeping aloof from the most cogent political debate, but expressing their opinion through observations and recommendations and, above all, through their unceasing work. Indeed, they understand that all the efforts made so far would be in vain where a medium-term strategy is not implemented to secure the lagoon, the city, and their inhabitants. The spirit that animates the Private Committees is that the built city, the *urbs*, cannot live without the environment in which it stands and without those who inhabit it, the *civitas*. The pandemic, the climate emergency and the rampant phenomenon of tourism have contributed to making Venice even more emblematic of the global challenges humanity is facing and at the same time have made it a possible model, an advanced laboratory of European recovery, in which culture understood in a broad sense plays a central role.

### **The 1964 *Carta di Venezia* for Venice**

With the 1999 Urban Plan, the ancient city is divided into typological classes by building, associating with each of them a series of permitted and prohibited transformations, the relevance of which is decisive for 90 percent of Venetian buildings, i.e., for all unrestricted fabric construction. The instrument has undoubtedly allowed a certain preservation of the city, even, precisely because of the nature of the typological setting, the Variant is ineffective with respect to preserving the authenticity of the subject.

Article 1 of the Charter states "The notion of historic monument includes both the isolated architectural creation and the urban or landscape environment that constitutes the testimony of a particular civilization, significant development, or historical event. This notion applies not only to large works but also to modest works that, over time, have acquired cultural significance (...)".

This concept was reiterated in Article 6 for which "The preservation of a monument implies that of its environmental condition. When a traditional environment subsists, that will be preserved; any new construction, destruction, and use that may alter the volume and colour relationships will also be banned".

The Charter also contemplates situations of integration and substitution of matter, as well described in Article 12, for which "The elements intended to replace the missing parts must harmoniously integrate into the whole, distinguishing themselves, however, from the original parts, so that the restoration does not falsify the monument, and are respected, both the aesthetic and the historical instance" and in Article 13: "Additions cannot be tolerated if they do not respect all the interesting parts of the building, its traditional environment, the balance of its whole, and its relationship with its surroundings".

If physical preservation is thus reflected in the Charter, both with reference to the individual monument protected by the laws on the preservation of Cultural Heritage and to the related built environment, which is in any case traceable to the objectives of landscape protection, the same cannot be said with respect to the attention that the issue of the use of the built heritage requires.

Although Article 5 of the Charter states that “the preservation of monuments is always favoured by their use in functions that are useful to society” as long as they are compatible with protection, today it is evident how this issue takes on a significant and wholly underestimated impact on the more general objective of physical preservation, particularly in the presence of *overtourism* and real estate and commercial dynamics such as to undermine *civitas* itself.

### Proposal for a Venice Charter for urban culture

Well before the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Venice Charter, as early as 2020 the Association of Private Committees, chaired by Paola Marini, who succeeded Alvise Zorzi and Umberto Marcello del Majno, took up a suggestion by Leo Schubert and drafted, with the participation of numerous institutions and qualified scholars, the proposal for a widely shared document to promote and support the effort so that cities under protection for their cultural value preserve and recover the characteristics of harmony with nature, inhabited place, high quality of life, cultural diversity, individual and community well-being, social justice and cohesion, and differentiated, sustainable and efficient economy.

The work around the proposal for a charter of Venice for urban culture can be traced back to the event of the city's second flooding on November 12, 2019, which once again further highlighted the fragility of Venice, threatened by the effects of climate change, *overtourism*, and still waiting for the Mo.S.E. to be in operation, so much so that it prompted further debate on whether to put the city and the lagoon on the list of endangered sites [13-14].

The following year, with the COVID pandemic, the extreme fragility of a mainly tourism-based economy was highlighted, raising urgent questions about the socio-economic future of the city and reopening glimpses in historical perspective related to what has been put in place in the past for the preservation of the city but also to resume the many reflections around its future. Figure 6 is a testament to the condition of the city during the pandemic: places that are usually crowded every day of the year are now only visible in the architecture that characterizes them.



**Figure 6.** St. Mark square empty during the COVID pandemic, 2020 (photo: Francesco Trovò).

In this context in harmony with the 2018 Davos Declaration in which European states commit themselves to fostering a supportive policy for the culture of quality construction, and taking into account the 2005 Faro Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society [15] the *Venice Charter for Urban Culture* [16] was drafted. Its purpose is to try to direct, on a basis of shared principles, a series of measures capable of preserving and developing urban culture to be transformed into concrete legislative measures and direct actions.

Thanks to the initiative and with the support of the Association of International Private Committees for the Safeguarding of Venice, a series of meetings were held for the creation and sharing of a document initially called the Venice Appeal for Urban Culture, with the hope that it could become a Charter based on an extensive consensus of insiders, citizens, and local institutions. The initiation of the document's drafting was reported at a first public meeting held on 1 October 2020 at the little theater of Palazzo Grassi in Venice with various sponsorships (Swiss Confederation, Consulate General of Switzerland in Milan, and the German Center for Venetian Studies, in charge of Culture and Mass Media of the Federal Republic of Germany). The final version was presented in Venice on 22 September 2021 at the European Cultural Heritage Summit and at Biennale Architettura on 26 September 2021 (Figure 7) as part of the Resilient Communities meetings organized at the Italian Pavilion. Contributing to the document were Bruno Buratti, Brigadier General of the Guardia di Finanza; Emanuela Carpani, Soprintendente, Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle Arti e paesaggio per il Comune di Venezia e laguna; Marita Liebermann, Director Deutsches Studienzentrum in Venedig; Rainer Nagel, Director Bundesstiftung Baukultur; Sergio Pascolo, urban planner; Nicola Pellicani, PD deputy, Environment, Territory and Public Works Committee; Sneška Quaedvlieg - Mihailović, Europa Nostra Secretary General; Erminia Sciacchitano, Ministry of Culture; Leo Schubert, architect; Francesco Trovò, Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle Arti e paesaggio per il Comune di Venezia e laguna; Paolo Vitti, Europa Nostra; Mariella Zoppi, professor emerita University of Florence.

**APPELLO DI VENEZIA PER UNA RINNOVATA CULTURA URBANA**

26 OTTOBRE 2021, ORE 15.00  
PADIGLIONE ITALIA - BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

**COMUNITÀ RESILIENTI**

**PAOLA MARINI**  
*Presidente*  
*Comitati Privati Internazionali per la Salvaguardia di Venezia*

**LEO SCHUBERT**  
*Architetto*

**FEDERICA OLIVARES**  
*Direttrice*  
*International Program in Cultural Diplomacy*  
*Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore*

**FRANCESCO TROVÒ**  
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**MARITA LIEBERMANN**  
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**SERGIO PASCOLO**  
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*Guardia di Finanza*

**SNEŠKA QUAEDVLIEG-MIHAILOVIĆ**  
*Segretaria Generale*  
*Europa Nostra*

Evento organizzato nell'ambito del Padiglione Italia alla 17ª Mostra Internazionale di Architettura della Biennale di Venezia

COMITATI PRIVATI INTERNAZIONALI PER LA SALVAGUARDIA DI VENEZIA

Figure 7. Promotional banner for the event sharing Venice's appeal for a renewed urban culture, presented at the 2021 Biennale Exhibition.

What emerged from the discussion is that the density, plurality, and diversity of functions in historic cities are elements that testify to their stratifications, underpinning the quality of the built environment and secular resilience as population centres. Conservation and innovation, elements that have always coexisted in historic cities, are not as opposed, but complementary, in a logic of contemporary sustainability. It is no coincidence that the document was born in Venice: the lagoon city epitomizes many of the urgent and unresolved issues of historic cities: in parallel with the enormous efforts made or underway for its physical survival (protection against rising sea levels and thus the effects of climate change and continuous restoration to counteract the partly natural physical decay) the tangible and intangible heritage is confronted with the economy of tourism, which tends to monopolize the socio-economic sphere, with the risk of compromising or losing the complexity and potential of its social meanings and values. With the same trend as the sea level rises, the ancient city has been losing its inhabitants for more than half a century. Even if it succeeds in physically preserving it, in the period of a very few generations Venice could lose most of its resident citizens.

Right from the preamble of the Charter, it is evident that the tangible and intangible urban heritage of historic cities represents a model of ecological and social sustainability established over centuries and at high risk of disappearing within a generation by turning historic cities into a mere commodity.

The document frequently refers to the word culture, which calls up the complex of social, political, and economic institutions, artistic activities and spiritual and religious manifestations that characterize the life and material evidence of a society. Among its main purposes is recalled the importance of “Fostering, disseminating, preserving, and passing on the heritage and urban culture of historic cities”: they are still partly inhabited places where daily city life is conducted with the presence of a multiplicity of functions stratified over time and thickened over a contained area and tended to be within walking distance. Urban culture is made up of material and immaterial evidence multiplied through historical continuity. Through study and comparison with other settlement realities, its advantages and disadvantages can be understood with the aim of addressing current challenges. Other purposes made explicit in the paper include “raising awareness of the risks involved in the loss of the culture and urban heritage of historic cities, such as depopulation, the degradation of the social and physical fabric of abandoned places or the radical transformation of places of residence into places for short stays, with the loss of the sense of belonging to communities, the meanings of monuments, places of worship and memory, the resulting loss of identity and possible cultural comparisons and the loss of legality, land consumption and environmental damage caused by new subdivisions and transportation infrastructure outside the centres”.

Of particular importance are the benefits that arise from the «conserving and accumulating the quality and multiplicity of urban tangible and intangible heritage to ensure a higher quality of life rather than reducing it to a few predominantly commercial and receptive (leisure/tourist) or only tertiary functions», together the greatest threats of cities that attract large masses of visitors, whether because of their urban quality or their importance in the collective imagination. Finally, all of the following are recalled in order to promote their dissemination “the forms of sustainability handed down by the urban culture of historic cities such as the minimal use of resources accompanied by the continuous reuse of the built environment (...) such as saving land through density, pedestrian and public transport mobility favoured by compactness and proximity; the use of local resources and ecological construction techniques in addition to respect for the environment; the plurality and coexistence of the functions needed by resident communities, including the protection of the economic fabric of proximity”.

All of this gives long-term cohesion and social welfare for which historic cities are the most striking testimony: they often outlive their host states in longevity. Next, the «measures to protect the culture and urban heritage of historic cities» necessary to achieve the purposes

already listed are set forth. It takes generations to create the set of urban functions necessary for city life; it only takes a few years to destroy them.

In addition to recalling the importance of knowledge of the tangible and intangible elements that make up the historic city, on which the preservation of culture and heritage depends, the document calls for “identifying and analysing the negative, evolving actions that lead to the destruction of urban culture and heritage and counter them. They may be, in addition to physical destruction due to conflict, natural disasters and climate change, relocation of residence, services and necessary commercial fabric and workplaces, oversized mobility infrastructure and *overtourism*”. Figure 8 shows the extremely high number of tourists in the most important areas of the city, to the extent that parking and transit areas are completely saturated.



**Figure 8.** Numerous tourists pass through the city every day of the year, concentrating in particular on the route Ferrovia/P.le Roma - Rialto - San Marco, 2018 (photo: Francesco Trovò).

One part of the document concerns local administrators and the citizenry, calling on them to put in place “short-term actions to combat pollution, intensive and parasitic exploitation, the formation and consolidation of rents of position, the destruction and abuse of material goods, the expulsion of services to citizens, the privatization of public land and the removal, through change of destination, of areas from public usability and residency in favour of their commercial exploitation, with no return for the community, with strict observance of the already existing protection regulations”.

Finally, some factors are listed that can favour the development of a new culture, here understood as a complex of manifestations of social life, capable of counteracting problems that limit its full expression.

This new culture must therefore be encouraged by adhering to the objective of sustainability in its three different declinations: social, economic and ecological.

It should be implemented on the basis of the fundamental role of the protection of diversity and historical stratifications, through the maintenance and preservation of material and immaterial urban heritage.

Innovation and renovation should be encouraged, but by including, rather than excluding, history, prioritizing the search for compatibility of functions both with the material aspects of buildings and urban spaces, and with their functions in the context of the community, because of pre-existing functions.

These objectives cannot disregard the dissemination and enhancement of citizen services so as to ensure the presence in the city of the buildings and the institutions that support them, such as public offices, health services, schools and universities, sports facilities, and at the same time in the private sphere the economic, commercial, in general the activities at the basis of the residency of a community and the satisfaction of its primary needs in the territory.

In this logic, a culture of legality must be defended and fostered, understood as respect for the rules of carrying out the daily activities of a community and those of behaviour and civil coexistence, as an indispensable garrison, capable of governing even the dynamics of tourism in order that the balance with the other functions of the city is not altered and directed toward the quality of supply.

## Conclusion

The final part of the charter contains a series of proposals and measures to be taken for the development of culture and urban heritage in historic cities. While short-term actions allow a response to immediate challenges, issues related to climate change, tourist pressure, socio-economic transformation of old towns, and the impacts of some new projects require long-term planning and evaluation. Among the new elements expressed by the charter is the strong call for the need to build policies and measures at the national and local level capable of fostering the conditions for a growth in residency, the true supporting element for the care and conservation of historic cities, along with other aspects related to work, culture and ecology, which the charter highlights.

In support of these purposes, regulatory tools should be fostered and developed «for the definition of land use, with particular reference to the role of urban plans» and the already evolved regulatory framework on Cultural Heritage should also be improved so that it is supplemented with indications also on intangible assets and referring to the protection and development of socio-cultural issues. It is not enough to preserve buildings, museum collections, the historic urban landscape, which are very fragile (Figure 9): the charter makes it clear that the economic and commercial fabric also contributes to the preservation of the identity values of urban agglomerations over time, and at the same time indicates the instruments to be introduced to achieve this goal.



**Figure 9.** Venice and its urban system of canals, bridges and foundations is very fragile and requires continuous maintenance, 2019 (photo: Francesco Trovò).

To support the onerous commitment of private cultural property owners, state aid tied to socially responsible use is desirable, as adopted, for example, by the Special Laws for the Preservation of Venice, where residential use for private property benefiting from grants was a binding condition for the duration of 15 years.

To this end, it is necessary to provide “fiscal measures and instruments to incentivize residency (reliefs) or disincentivize intensive exploitation of assets and resources (polluter pays principle)”.

The charter encourages public-private collaboration to implement «forms of collaboration between citizens and the public administration for the care, management and redevelopment of common goods» of which the more than fifty years of working with local authorities and carrying out excellent work of the International Private Committees for the Safeguarding of Venice is a significant example. In these times when public funding for culture and in particular for the restoration of historic buildings is scarce, the achievement of objectives for the goal of conservation also depends on the ability to form public-private partnerships, and therefore, as the charter points out, on how to pursue this target.

Examples are buildings given in concession by municipalities or the state to foundations for a predetermined period of time in return for carrying out exemplary restoration and use. Huge potential exists in Italy, given the many abandoned public properties in prime locations, often sold at auction without criteria for their future use [17]. In addition, great emphasis is placed in the charter on opportunities related to “interdisciplinary, national, and supranational exchanges in order to compare different experiences and promote the spread of awareness of the importance of the role of UNESCO governance policies (Steering Committee, Heritage Impact Assessment procedures, etc.)”.

The critical gaze of experts from outside the local realities and the discussion of whether to put a city on the list of endangered world heritage sites allow for fruitful comparisons and media visibility that can generate political pressure and incentivize new solutions to problems that have been unsolved for decades.

Finally, education, research, and outreach dissemination through museums, libraries, archives, theatres, cinemas, and other institutions are to be considered decisive for the

transmission of culture by contributing concretely to the quality of life in the city. It is noted that foundations such as the *Bundesstiftung Baukultur* in Germany [15] or the recently established *Stiftung Baukultur Schweiz*, which came into being as a result of the 2018 Davos Declaration, that are concerned with the promotion, research and dissemination around the issues addressed above, are still too rare.

Italy, with its exceptional built heritage and long-standing culture of preservation could play a key role in the European scene, Venice, thanks to its Architecture Biennale, could be a privileged place to host a foundation dealing specifically with urban culture, its preservation and development.

#### Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dr. Erica Rompani for her support.

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RECEIVED: 2024.3.19

REVISED: 2025.5.23

ACCEPTED: 2025.10.19

ONLINE: 2026.5.29



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