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Chaire UNESCO
Culture, Tourisme,
Développement



A Workshop on:

“Viability, Sustainability and Challenges for Puglia Region and Salento, as a key for Cultural Tourism Development for Mediterranean Regions”

28 – 31 October 2015

Final Report

Part 1: Lecce and the Salento

Objective: To identify the main issues and strategies to enable a successful inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Methodology: we met several local stakeholders, and visited the sites that have been identified by the organizers of this workshop as the most representative and important.

Precedents: a previous project of UNESCO candidacy had been prepared in the past, focusing on the **Leccese barocco** (as cultural landscape) based on the fact that this title was already included on the tentative list. The goal of the workshop was to evaluate that previous strategy, and eventually to suggest endorsing it or recommending an alternative one.

Title of the proposition:

The Mosaic Identity of Salento Cultural Landscapes: A tangible and intangible blend

Justification:

Outstanding universal value: The most striking element for us was the mix between various elements and cultural traditions, on this territory. The Salento's mosaic appears as a metaphor

of such a mix, with the presence of King Arthur and Alexander the Great in its drawing, as a metaphor of a bridge between Eastern and Western Europe, creating a gateway to less familiar yet not less impressive and important cultures. Actually, different cultures and identities has brought together its Salento uniqueness, that relies on natural and cultural landscape elements such as its geographic situation in the heel of the boot of the peninsula, with beautiful beaches into the Adriatic and Ionian seas and authentic individual components such as baroque monuments, palaces, churches made with local sandstone, its authentic gastronomy.

So the outstanding universal value should be in the fact that this territory is a striking example of a cultural mosaic, that relies on various circulations and cultural exchanges, and whose result can be found in tangible sites and landscapes such as in intangible elements.

Territory: For our team, a candidacy limited to Lecce would be a strategic mistake. The Salento should appear as the territorial basis of the candidacy. Nevertheless, it won't be possible to inscribe the whole Salento. The process, therefore, should enable to identify specific elements that are key and representative of the whole Salento, as a mix. This territory should include the Otranto cathedral's mosaic, Santa Caterina Church in Galatina; Abbey of Cerrate Byzantine crypts of Carpignano; Castle of Corigliano d'Otranto; Castle of Copertino; underground oil mill of Gallipoli and Sternatia, Lecce city and fortified farms of Monacelli; and Melcarne near Lecce. These are examples of the key sites that epitomizing the meaning of the whole candidacy.

Category: the category of cultural landscape (based on the 1972 WH Convention) is the only one that enables to mix tangible and intangible elements, on a territorial basis.

Criteria: we discussed the criteria on the basis on which this site could be presented. It is not necessary to use all the criteria : the most important, to be considered for the presentation of the outstanding value, are the criteria 1, 2 and 6 but the others are of no less importance and/or relevance.

- Criterion 1: « *to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius* » : this criteria is important to present the architectural excellence of the site, on several realizations (depending on the choice : barocco elements, the mosaic of Otranto, etc)
- Criterion 2: « *to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design* ». This criterion is a key in the candidacy strategy. The idea of a cultural mosaic, as the result of circulations of artistic and architectural movements, but also populations, migrations, etc. should be central of the candidacy. The geographical position (between North and South, East and West,

Roman finis terrae, the gateway to the East) is important in the writing of this criterion, to indicate the fact that these historical elements have a powerful meaning.

- Criterion 3 : « *to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared*; » Here we recommend to use the Greek cultural symbols and the disappearing (yet still spoken Greek language) as a cultural testimony of old and prevailing traditions.
- Criterion 4 : « *to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history*; » Here we recommend to use the various architectural realisations that express this idea of mix : the Lecce baroque, the Otranto cathedral, basilica di Santa Catarina, etc.
- Criterion 5 : « *to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change*; » This criteria is not crucial for this proposal, unless productive landscapes are integrated.
- Criterion 6 : « *to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance* ». Some living traditions are associated to the cultural landscape, and should also be regarded as examples of mix between various cultural elements. Here we can use the Fokara event as a good example, as music festivals (the night of Tarantula) and religious rites.

Strategy:

- The candidacy should be prepared at the scale of Salento, with local public and private stakeholders: such as the local clubs UNESCO of Galatina, Otranto, Lecce, councilors in charge of culture of those cities specified above, Province of Lecce and the Chamber of Commerce of Lecce. It is advised that the whole process will be coordinated by the University of Salento.
- The candidacy should imply a part of Salento, not the whole territory. But it doesn't mean the exclusion of the other localities from the process: the Salento should be regarded as the area associated, and object of global strategy built on the UNESCO designation.
 - It is advised that as part of the application process, the city of Lecce will commission a master plan for cultural tourism development. This plan will synchronize the candidacy documents with a balanced and up-to-date strategic steps to assure sustainable cultural tourism within and around the city.

Part 2: Alberobello

Objective: Identify the main issues for a balanced tourism development of Alberobello that has already 1.5 million of visitors a year.

Methodology: visit of the site, discussions and debates with local stakeholders (the Mayor, local associations, and other stakeholders).

Title of the proposition: Toward balancing Tourism in a Culturally Fragile Setting - The case of Alberobello.

A SWOT analysis

Strengths

- The unique *Trulli* houses of Alberobello (UNESCO world heritage since 1996) which serve as a focal element of tourism interest in the area.
- A substantial part of the town has already been transformed into a tourist enclave, which allows the sustainable protection of other segments of the village.
- Part of the town is still not fully developed and still inhabited by locals although initiatives of B & B are already evident.
- The Mayor and the local authority is supportive of establishing a well-balanced tourism development.
- The local population and its active participation through local associations in *Trulli* preservation may guarantee long-term commitment to keep Alberobello is a living museum.
- The place has already evolved into a “strong” tourist product - a brand that attracts almost every tourist coming to this region of Italy.

Weaknesses

- A substantial part of the town has already been transformed into a tourist enclave
- There is no coherent and well-calibrated management plan for the town.
- Italian companies located outside the region operate some of the existing services.
- Not all merchandises sold as local products are indeed local and/or represent local culture; Furthermore, the quality of craftsmanship is poor and lacks innovation and recreation of local cultural manifestations.
- The local community has never been asked or actively involved in setting limits for acceptable change in the wake of tourism development and growth.
- Over the years and as part of tourism growth, the authenticity of the *Trulli* houses have been transformed from storage and residential functions to tourism functions. As of

today, there is no clear strategy indicating what should be a balanced use of these houses, which are the reasons for designating Alberobello as a WHP.

- The signposting of the UNESCO label in the destination is weak and almost invisible in the prevailing tourist signs.
- If the predominant visitors are SSS tourists, this may act as a deficiency due to their limited commitment to the sustainability of the place.
- Despite being inscribed on the WH list, the site experiences a rapid transformation towards a mass tourism site.

Opportunities

- The number of visitors arriving each year is growing
- The relative proximity to the sea front allows it to become part of a regional tourism system offering cultural tourism experiences alongside to beach holidaymaking.
- Being already, a WH Property inscribed by UNESCO enhances the chances of being well protected also in the future. Such protecting policy may also be applied to other cultural properties in the area, which are not part of the inscription.

Threats

- The number of visitors arriving each year is growing and may generate carrying capacity problems

Recommendations:

It is advised that Alberobello will adjust its operational and management strategies of its World Heritage Property to comply with modern sustainability requirements, on the one hand, and with the on-going growth of tourism demand, on the other hand. Such readjustments should include the introduction of new:

- Revised definition of the tourist catchment area
- Revised Site (territorial) management plan including upgraded zoning of the visitation and non-visitation spaces
- Introduction of Community Based Tourism (CBT) development based on bottom up approach
- Establishment of regional DMO based on Private - Public Partnership (PPP) with strong regional operational aspects.
- Newly developed marketing and communication strategy that are in line with attainable sustainability principles.

- Developed accommodation policy which complies with attainable sustainability principles
- Monitoring and dynamic research system that provides constant and real time information on gaps between expected and actual management performance of the WH Property.

It is advised that all the above strategies and tactics would be developed in details as part of a new master plan for tourism development of the Alberobello region to be commissioned by the Municipality and/or by other regional and governmental agencies.