

COUNCIL OF EUROPE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (89) 6

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

ON THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT
OF THE RURAL ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 April 1989
at the 425th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Organisation is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of facilitating in particular their economic and social progress;

Having regard to the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, opened for signature at Granada on 3 October 1985;

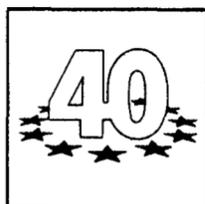
Having regard to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, opened for signature in Madrid on 21 May 1980;

Observing that the changing patterns of agricultural production and the social transformations they have engendered in recent decades are endangering the very existence of traditional rural architecture and its setting;

Believing that this heritage today constitutes not only one of the most authentic components of European culture but remains a major factor of local development;

Stressing the compelling need for member states and the European institutions to take account of both the built and the natural heritage when framing their policies for agriculture and the environment,

Recommends that the governments of member states base the formulation of their policies regarding the protection and enhancement of the rural heritage on the guidelines contained in the appendix to this recommendation.



Forty years
Council of Europe

Appendix to Recommendation No. R (89) 6

I. *To safeguard the collective memory of rural Europe by developing instruments for research into and identification of its architectural heritage :*

1. By continuing to establish both detailed scientific inventories and more succinct geographical typologies of direct relevance to protection and enhancement policies ;
2. By organising the work of identifying the rural heritage on a multidisciplinary basis that embraces architectural and artistic qualities as well as geographical, historical, economical, social and ethnological factors.

II. *To incorporate the protection of the built heritage into the planning, regional development and environmental protection process :*

1. By enforcing the law on the heritage, the environment and town planning in order to improve land-use management aimed at :
 - i. providing legal protection, within the meaning of the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, for the most representative elements of the built heritage (monuments, groups of buildings, sites) ;
 - ii. the framing of co-ordinated strategies for the comprehensive protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage based on a comprehensive system of planning that incorporates these two inseparable aspects of the rural heritage ;
 - iii. proper control over the use of land, including :
 - restrictions on uncontrolled development for buildings or facilities that gradually and irrevocably destroy the harmony of the landscape,
 - improved integration of new buildings into their settings by defining a minimum set of imposed standards ;
2. By supplementing sometimes inadequate or inappropriate planning directives through the development of firmly based systems of incentives, advisory services and architectural assistance with the purpose of :
 - i. encouraging the reuse of existing buildings, however humble they are (houses, agricultural or industrial buildings), by seeking to adapt them to new purposes while conserving as much of their original character as possible ;
 - ii. drawing the attention of the general public and economic agents to the values of the local architecture as expressed in a time-honoured use of materials, proportions, building techniques and architectural details ;
 - iii. applying in the case of protected buildings the principles of the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, adopted in Venice in 1964 by the 2nd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, and advocating for the upkeep and renovation of all buildings, where traditional materials are not available, the use of the most suitable substitutes ;
 - iv. promoting a contemporary local architecture with a creative approach that is based on the lessons and the spirit of traditional architecture ;
3. By pursuing a resolute policy aimed at the harmonious development of the rural environment without which it is impossible to imagine a heritage policy respecting the principles of the 1983 European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter, which seeks to achieve a more satisfactory regional balance in Europe.

III. *To activate the enhancement of the heritage as a vital factor of local development :*

1. By maintaining and increasing public investment owing to its impact on the economy as a whole, particularly with respect to job creation, through :
 - i. financial inducements on the part of the state, the regions and the local authorities to encourage the renovation of buildings and the protection of sites :
 - grants or loans with interest rate subsidies for improvements to existing housing,
 - grants for repairs to protected buildings and alterations to built-up sites,
 - grants for the improvement of public areas in small towns ;
 - ii. support for economic activities and the local prosperity upon which the upkeep, restoration and enhancement of buildings ultimately depend :
 - public grants for the modernisation of farms,
 - grants to various undertakings encouraging multiple activities, the establishment of businesses and craft industries,
 - grants for tourist facilities and rural holiday accommodation ;

iii. the construction of community facilities and infrastructures designed to safeguard and expand economic activities in rural areas, especially in regard to new technologies and access to computer-cum-telecommunications networks ;

2. By further developing, at the regional or local level, training courses in building techniques and crafts through :

i. the provision of courses, within the specialist training system, for architects, town planners, conservation personnel and construction technicians on :

— traditional building materials and techniques,

— the durability of such materials and their possible combination with modern materials,

— the cost of such traditional techniques and the conditions regarding their present-day use or their replacement by modern techniques and materials ;

ii. the establishment of training centres for manual crafts closely integrated into the local economy and renovation programmes ;

iii. the organisation of training sessions aimed at owners and farmers, on the upkeep of buildings ;

3. By encouraging, through regulations, tax measures and budgetary allocations, pilot experiments involving both public and private bodies for purposes such as :

i. the creation of “nature parks” or “open-air museums” that combine the protection of natural landscapes and buildings with local economic and social development in areas suffering from natural handicaps or problems of economic transformation ;

ii. the carrying out of major projects to enhance the rural built and natural heritage with the help of active and unemployed persons ;

4. By encouraging the setting up of small teams of educators and development personnel to assist the local authorities in carrying out general rural development projects.

IV. To promote greater respect for and knowledge of the rural heritage throughout Europe :

1. By giving urgent and thorough consideration to :

i. the consequences of certain agricultural production and market organisation methods for the environment, and the deterioration or abandonment of the built heritage ;

ii. the real cost of the deterioration of the rural heritage in the socio-economic life of Europe ;

2. By pursuing research, under the auspices of the Council of Europe and on a multidisciplinary basis, into the necessary conditions for more effective conservation of the countryside, an irreplaceable heritage in itself ;

3. By encouraging, with the aid of appropriate regulations and financial measures, including implementation of the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, transnational or transregional exchange programmes, particularly in the field of vocational training, mutual technical assistance and reciprocal information on building crafts and skills ;

4. By facilitating the organisation of competitions and exhibitions, the production of publications and audiovisual material, in order to make elected representatives, the general public, young people, owners and farmers aware of the riches of the rural heritage and the reasons for wanting to preserve it.