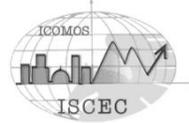




International
Council on
Monuments and Sites



International
Scientific Committee
on Economics of Conservation

PORTS AS NEW MAGNETS FOR URBAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

I.S.C.E.C. Malta Meeting (May 24-25, 2012)

Auberge de France

Birgu, La Vallette - Malta

Prologue

The grandfather of modern economics, Adam Smith, referred already to seashores and riverbanks as poles of economic wealth, as their openness allowed them to establish trade relationships with the rest of the world. In the course of time, ports have developed as major logistic magnets inducing trade and transport connections all over the world. And consequently, many port areas laid the foundation for a rise in welfare, not only for the direct areas concerned, but also for the hinterlands connected with these areas and for all other places served by these ports. Port areas were always hotspots of economic activity.

In the past decades, many port areas have gone through a phase of decline, as they became outdated or were replaced by modern facilities elsewhere. This has left many cities with large harbour front areas that were dilapidated and showed clear signs of environmental decay and even poverty. Such brownfields have increasingly become a source of policy concern and have stimulated the emergence of various land use initiatives in order to exploit the hitherto unused economic, social, logistic, cultural and environmental opportunities of such areas. As a result, many cities have in the past years developed new policy mechanisms for upgrading their port brownfields through harbour front and seafront development (e.g. the London Dockyards, the Kop van Zuid in Rotterdam, Cape Town, New York, Yokohama, Singapore, Helsinki etc.). The two

keywords in this drastic land use conversion are: *sustainable* development and *creative* sector stimulation.

Nowadays, port areas can constitute the entry point and core place for sustainable development for the entire urban system. To understand and exploit this potential, it will be necessary to design an analytical framework which would link the new opportunities provided by traditional port areas to creative and sustainable urban development. From that perspective, there is a need to develop fit-for-purpose, dedicated policy tools and initiatives, on the basis of general planning principles for harbour front and sea front development. This task would have to be undertaken against the background of the challenge to improve the socio-economic and ecological resilience of a port area – in relation to the city system – and to activate many initiatives that would convert historico-cultural urban port landscapes into sustainable and creative hotspots, starting from re-using, recovering and regenerating such places. This would also call for a new analytical apparatus in which integrated assessment of novel initiatives would have to be ensured in order to balance also conflicts between interests and values of a multiplicity of stakeholders. A simultaneous improvement of policy goals associated with port development – such as job creation, foreign direct investment, creative sector development, environmentally-benign mobility, and sustainable land use – would thus be a major task for a modern city.

Clearly, cities are not only engines of economic progress, but they are also the places where cultural heritage is prominently present. This also holds for port cities, which house a wealth of remainings from the past: warehouses, silos, wharfs, lighthouses, industrial archaeology, and so forth. It seems therefore plausible to seek the anchor points of urban rehabilitation of port areas in their undervalued land use related to past activities from the past. The general condition is that cities should be able to develop highly innovative strategic approaches of planning, conservation and management that really integrate harbour development into urban development. Indeed, organizational and economic innovation is key to improve the resilience of a city/port system, and thus the overall sustainability.

Good practices can be found in various urban economies, and good practices exist in the conservation of cultural heritage and historic landscape port areas (also in UNESCO port cities). They should be carefully assessed in their capacity to combine and balance intangible values and economic ones.

The goals of the meeting in Malta on “Ports as New Magnets for Urban Sustainable Development” would be:

- to seek for appropriate indicators and research tools for mapping out the performance of new port area/cities development initiatives
- to identify principles that would reconcile the different objectives and initiatives of a multiplicity of distinct stakeholders
- to identify the necessary conditions for the design of the creative sector and sustainable developments in port areas/cities
- to seek for a balanced development of – and cooperation between – the various stakeholders’ interests regarding port areas
- to map out learning modes based on good practices or experiences in various parts of the world.

Keynote speakers:

Francesco Bandarin (Unesco)

Ray Bondin (Ambassador of Malta Government to Unesco)

Luigi Fusco Girard (University of Naples Federico II)

Peter Nijkamp (Free University of Amsterdam)

Karima Kourtit (Free University of Amsterdam)

Joe Ravetz (University of Manchester) [waiting confirmation]

Magda Sibley (University of Manchester)

Francesca Medda (London School of Economics)

The call for paper:

Abstract deadline: 15 April, 2012

Final paper deadline: 30 April 2012

- **Contacts and Conference Secretariat:**

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