

Davos²⁰¹⁸ Declaration

Conference of Ministers of Culture
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Towards a European vision of high-quality *Baukultur*

Europe in the first decades of the 21st century is a Europe of great variety. The traditional and natural variety of the continent still impacts on our societies, settlements and landscapes. Increased global cultural exchange is raising Europe's potential for innovation and creativity. However, despite the differences in economic, societal and political realities, a disturbing tendency is becoming obvious in terms of Europe's built environment, i.e. cultural landscapes, villages and cities: their quality is being challenged. Whilst the centres of historical cities and villages and other cultural heritage sites are largely being protected, and outstanding examples of contemporary architecture and civil engineering are being built all over Europe, elsewhere a trivialisation of our built environment is evident. The everyday appearance of Europe is increasingly being moulded by unambitious urban sprawl. Many historical and cultural-heritage sites are getting lost in areas characterised by infrastructure, shopping centre zones, industrial estates and suburbs, which although planned, are not properly designed, or in residential areas without much design aspiration. This problem not only affects cities but also rural areas.

In terms of the broad mass of construction, culture has taken a back seat and too much room has been given to an attitude that prioritises technical and economic mechanisms. This is having a negative impact on society, for the quality of the built environment profoundly affects the well-being and quality of life of its inhabitants. It is a crucial factor in social interaction and cohesion, in creativity and in the identification with place. That is why construction both *is* culture and creates space *for* culture. And that is why, particularly in times of rapid global change, the importance of culture must once again take centre stage in the development and evaluation of our built environment. It is high time for the creation of a European policy of high-quality *Baukultur*.

In this European vision for a high-quality *Baukultur*, the quality of the entire built environment is seen as a strategic imperative. Cultural heritage and contemporary works form a single entity, in which cultural heritage must be protected and preserved, and the historical buildings, infrastructure and public space taken as a reference point for continuous spatial transformation and progress. High-quality *Baukultur* includes not only the result of this approach in terms of actual construction, but also the processes that lead up to it.

This is why, in the context of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, Switzerland has taken the initiative of highlighting the importance of high-quality *Baukultur* for European society, by organising an Informal Conference for the Ministers of Culture from the signatory states of the European Cultural Convention and from the observer states of the Council of Europe. The Conference stresses the necessity for a holistic approach to *Baukultur*, as a common good and a shared responsibility, and the urgent need for common action to improve the built environment of our cities and villages. A high-quality *Baukultur* will secure the quality of life in Europe, sustaining social cohesion, well-being and resilience. It will foster vibrant and mixed neighbourhoods, protect the environment and generate positive economic value.

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1 Common concerns and global trends

Urbanisation and social change

European settlements and landscapes are characterised by a rich and diverse culture of construction which has evolved over time. Due to its geographic climate conditions and the political, social and economic circumstances which have shaped it, Europe boasts a range of distinctive, regionally-specific features. Mass motorisation, which began in the second half of the 20th century, and the associated settlement development profoundly changed the landscape. Intermediate zones evolved on the periphery of many urban spaces, resulting in densely populated residential areas with a high saturation of infrastructure and functional buildings. Many settlements are characterised by fragmented public spaces, large-scale commercial districts, and mushrooming housing estates, so that their centres are often difficult to recognise. Starting in the 20th century, standardisation and mass production have significantly changed construction. The construction industry increasingly resorts to off-the-shelf solutions, which standardise and often trivialise the formal vocabulary and weaken regional identities.

Whereas large cities and metropolitan areas are currently experiencing growth and renewal, there are increasing concerns about small and medium-sized cities and rural areas. Some of these territories have become marginalised, due to migration and economic change. Growing polarisation is amplifying the disparities. Many of these regions are being forced to deal with increased emigration, leading to a surplus of housing and more and more vacant properties. Job losses and the lack of funding are impeding basic supply and maintenance area-wide. Whole regions are suffering economic stagnation or shrinkage, which is leading to a feeling of exclusion. Increasing social and economic polarisation is fostering the rise of political extremism and populism.

The accumulation of economic, political and cultural power in the urban centres and metropolitan areas will continue. Currently, 73% of Europe's population live in urban areas, and urbanisation is expected to reach approximately 80% by 2050, albeit with regional fluctuations.¹ This continuing urbanisation strengthens the dominant role of cities. The concentration of job opportunities and higher education institutes in the European cities is making them more and more attractive for working-age residents, causing a renaissance in urban living. The increasing demand for real estate and housing is constantly pushing up prices, with the result that excessive gentrification and international commodification of the real estate market are ousting the incumbent residents. Cities may become unaffordable for large parts of the local population. As a result, inequality within cities is being increased and reinforced by segregation and polarisation.²

While the global population is expected to have risen to 9.7 billion by 2050, with the highest growth rates anticipated for Asia and Africa, the population of Europe is expected to decrease slightly, albeit with considerable fluctuation between regions.³ The growth of the global population and the related global economic effects will lead to escalating shortages of resources, which will in turn result in a shift in the global balance of power. The UN predicts that this, coupled with the foreseeable climate changes, will cause an increase in global migration movements. Rural depopulation and the displacement of people due to political conflict are giving further impetus to global migration, with a knock-on effect on Europe.

¹ United Nations: World Urbanization Prospects, 2014 revision, New York 2014, as well as ESPON: Making Europe Open and Polycentric. Vision and Scenarios for the European Territory towards 2050, Luxembourg 2014

² European Union/UN-Habitat: The State of European Cities 2016, Luxembourg 2016.

³ United Nations: World Population Prospects, The 2015 Revision, Key findings and advance tables, New York 2015, as well as ESPON: Making Europe Open and Polycentric. Vision and Scenarios for the European Territory towards 2050, Luxembourg 2014

Demographic change, increasing mobility and new social models and behaviours will influence the requirements for buildings, cities and infrastructure and the future design of the built environment.⁴ The average number of persons per household has dropped. The central role of the traditional family model is coming under pressure. The proportion of elderly people is increasing, as is the fragmentation of population groups. Changes in travel behaviour and an increase in city tourism, in particular, have resulted in a constant stream of tourists flocking to European cities. This has the positive effect of added economic value, but on the other hand also has negative consequences for the local population and the use and organisation of their space.⁵

Digitalisation

The fourth industrial revolution has begun. The vision of interconnectedness between virtual and physical devices in a global network, the “Internet of Things” (IoT), is becoming fact. Information and communication technology and advancing digitalisation are changing our everyday lives, consumer activity and social behaviour. The creation of artificial images and virtual realities is influencing the perception of aspects of the physical living environment. This can lead to distorted ideals interfering with the real world. By converting the world into globally similar, abstract images, digital media also influence the real “lived space”. This may have a growing impact on our physical environment: cultural values, such as the authenticity and historic originality of material and substance, may lose importance in favour of more standardised images and perceptions. Building and construction and the way we use them, are becoming more determined by global tendencies. Social networks are no longer tied to particular physical places. The way in which people use and identify with the places they live in is changing, due to a global digital space. The function of city centres and villages as central public spaces with a diverse mix of people and functions is being challenged. Meanwhile, the emotional and social need for “authenticity” is being met by an increasing interest in the (often touristic) experience of cultural and natural diversity.

Global interconnectedness, and thus open access to, and sharing of, information and data, also brings opportunities. The concept of the Council of Europe’s “Internet of citizens” is a people-centred approach to the Internet, aimed at empowering everyone to participate in digital culture. The new digital environment should be used to reinforce societies by affording access to and participation in an open culture and thereby strengthening democracy.⁶

Creating new buildings, settlements and open landscapes, or reconstructing or altering past or existing ones, is becoming easier thanks to new technologies. New models of financing, such as crowdfunding, can strengthen participation. Social interactions via low-threshold communication channels have changed participation and can help to raise public awareness of questions relating to the built environment, thus enabling new forms of debate, participation and sensitisation.

Digitalisation also influences construction materials and techniques, thus having a direct impact on the design and appearance of buildings. Digital applications such as BIM (Building Information Modelling) and “Contour Crafting” (building printing technology) determine the design process and thus the layout and appearance of future constructions. Intelligent buildings with largely interconnected technologies may lead to the development of new building typologies.

⁴ Eurostat: Statistics on European Cities, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_European_cities (accessed 16.09.2017).

⁵ Eurostat: Urban Europe — statistics on cities, towns and suburbs — tourism and culture in cities, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Urban_Europe_%E2%80%94_statistics_on_cities,_towns_and_suburbs_%E2%80%94_tourism_and_culture_in_cities (accessed on 22.08.2017)

⁶ Council of Europe: Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the Internet of citizens, https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c20f4 (accessed 16.09.2017)

Climate change and environmental damage

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges for the living environment. Global warming will lead to rising sea levels and snow lines. Climatic extremes are accelerating and causing more frequent natural disasters. Flooding, landslides and erosion are occurring more often, and the regions affected require additional safety measures, which impact on open landscapes and settlements. Extreme weather events are on the rise and precipitation patterns are changing. Cities are being affected by heat waves and flooding. The impact of climate change is particularly keenly felt in the areas of agriculture, forestry, energy management and tourism.⁷

The reduction of CO₂ emissions and thus of dependence on fossil fuels is increasingly being seen as playing a crucial role in combatting climate change. Many countries have put greater emphasis on sources of renewable energy. The shift towards renewable energy entails fundamental changes to settlements and open landscapes. Besides a move away from fossil energies, there is a move towards compact settlements and well-insulated buildings which use less energy.⁸ Integrated systems allowing zero-emission building management offer new opportunities of design for new and existing buildings. Energy-saving measures and programmes, however, can prove a challenge for cultural heritage assets, and the design quality of new constructions may be impaired if energy-related aspects of construction do not take cultural values into account.

Great progress has been made throughout Europe in recent decades to mitigate adverse environmental conditions. Nevertheless, disturbing trends can still be observed, including a constant reduction in biodiversity and an increase in micropollutants in the air, water and ground,⁹ for which construction activity is partially responsible.

Addressing these concerns and reacting to global trends are challenges that will influence the form and design of the future built environment in Europe, as well as the behaviour and values, on different levels, of our societies. Various global and European initiatives have been developed to face these challenges. The built environment, often with a special focus on cities, is the subject of worldwide discussion and developmental targets. Issues such as the eradication of poverty and inequalities, economic prosperity, security, disaster risk reduction, mobility, energy consumption – in short, the sustainable and inclusive built environment – are being incorporated into numerous international strategies, programmes and projects. The relevant documents have been compiled in the annex.

2 The central role of culture for society

Culture is “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and ... encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs”.¹⁰ Culture shapes people’s identities and defines their legacies. There can be no humanity, rationality, critical judgment and moral commitment without culture.¹¹ Culture is the basis for a satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual existence.

⁷ European Commission: Climate Action, Climate change consequences, https://ec.europa.eu/clima/change/consequences_en (accessed 16.09.2017)

⁸ European Commission: Climate Action, 2030 climate & energy framework, https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2030_en (accessed 29.05.2017)

⁹ European Environment Agency: SOER 2015, The European environment, state and outlook 2015 <https://www.eea.europa.eu/soer> (accessed 15.09.2017)

¹⁰ UNESCO: Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, Preamble, Paris 2001, http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/5_Cultural_Diversity_EN.pdf (accessed 15.09.2017)

¹¹ cf. UNESCO: Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, Mexico City, 1982. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0005/000525/052505eo.pdf> (accessed 04.09.2017)

Culture enables and drives economic, social and environmental change. There can be no democratic and peaceful sustainable development without culture. It is therefore increasingly being perceived as a central component of sustainability and sustainable development.¹² The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** frames the central role played by culture in the form of several *sustainable development goals* (SDGs), and goal no. 11 directly refers to it.¹³ A comprehensive approach to human development, based on the appreciation and utilisation of culture is required. Culture is viewed as a “system of values and a resource and framework to build truly sustainable development, the need to draw from the experiences of past generations, and the recognition of culture as part of the global and local commons as well as a wellspring for creativity and renewal”.¹⁴

The special value of historic urban areas is highlighted by UNESCO’s **Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape HUL**. It recognises cultural heritage, mainly in cities, as an important contributor to the quality of life, promoting economic development and strengthening social cohesion in a changing global environment. However, rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation poses a serious challenge to the urban historic landscape. It can lead to social and spatial fragmentation and impair the quality of both cities and rural areas.¹⁵

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN Habitat, adopted a **New Urban Agenda** at the **Habitat III** Conference in 2016, which outlines general sustainable development goals and focuses on questions of governance, social cohesion and the environment. The agenda “acknowledges that culture and cultural diversity are sources of enrichment for humankind and provide an important contribution to the sustainable development of cities, human settlements and citizens, empowering them to play an active and unique role in development initiatives.”¹⁶

At a European level, the care for and preservation of cultural heritage has in recent years again been emphasised as a central social factor.¹⁷ For the Council of Europe’s **European Landscape Convention**

¹² United Nations, General Assembly, 86th session: Resolution “Culture and Sustainable Development” (A/RES/68/223), December 2013, https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/223 (accessed 16.09.2017)

¹³ United Nations, General Assembly, 70th session: Resolution “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (A/RES/70/1), October 2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E (accessed 16.09.2017)

¹⁴ UNESCO/Hangzhou Municipal People’s Government: The Hangzhou Declaration, Culture: Key to Sustainable Development, Hangzhou 2013.

<http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/images/FinalHangzhouDeclaration20130517.pdf> (accessed on 15.09.2017), and later on: UNESCO/ Hangzhou Municipal People’s Government: HANGZHOU OUTCOMES, Hangzhou, 2015 http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/SustCit_Hangzhou_Outcomes_EN.pdf (accessed on 16.09.2017). Cf also: Joost Dessein, Katriina Soini, Graham Fairclough, Lummina Horlings (eds): Culture in, for, and as Sustainable Development, Conclusions from the COST Action IS1007 Investigation Cultural Sustainability, University of Jyväskylä, Finland 2015 <http://www.culturalsustainability.eu/conclusions.pdf> (accessed 16.09.2017)

¹⁵ UNESCO: Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, Paris 2011 <http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/638> (accessed 16.09.2017)

¹⁶ United Nations: Habitat III, New Urban Agenda, 2017 <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf> (accessed 04.09.2017). It served as a basis for a UNESCO report focused specifically on culture, urbanism and sustainable development: UNESCO: Culture: Urban Future. Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development, Paris 2016: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002462/246291E.pdf> (accessed 04.09.2017)

¹⁷ E.g.: European Council: Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe, Brussels, May 2014 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142705.pdf (accessed 16.09.2017) ; European Council: Council conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage, November 2014 [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XG1223\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XG1223(01)&from=EN) (accessed 17.09.2017); European Commission: Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Brussels 2014 http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/publications/2014-heritage-communication_en.pdf (accessed 17.09.2017)

of 2000,¹⁸ landscape, as a reflection of European identity and diversity, is the living natural and cultural heritage, be it ordinary or outstanding, urban or rural, on land or in water. The **Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society** (Faro-Convention) of 2005¹⁹ defines cultural heritage as an important resource for the promotion of cultural variety and of the sustainable development of society, the economy and the environment.

Cultural demands are also made at a European level with respect to contemporary planning and construction. The EU has recognised the importance of a high quality built environment for the sustainable city and has articulated this in the form of two resolutions of the Council of the EU.²⁰ Both texts call for an increase in architectural quality to take into account the sustainability of cities, including careful treatment of their cultural heritage.

The built environment must provide good, safe and healthy living conditions and a cultural environment that contributes to social cohesion. The cultural environment includes all the imprints of human activity on the physical environment throughout history. A cultural environment embraces a spatial context, which may contain objects but also includes intangible aspects linked to that place such as traditions, practices, knowledge and skills. Public cultural environment management comprises the organised processes that look after cultural environments in contemporary society. Everyone, irrespective of background, has a right to experience and belong to this cultural environment. This requires cross-sectoral cooperation and governance at several levels simultaneously, where all stakeholders are responsible for ensuring a diverse cultural environment within a qualitative spatial setting that is inclusive and accessible to all.

3 “Quality” as the strategic imperative

Construction serves artistic, aesthetic, cultural and social as well as economic and technical purposes. The goal is to guarantee fitness for purpose, longevity, safety, comfort and health on one hand, whilst on the other bringing people together, giving them a sense of well-being, and promoting social cohesion. Construction creates space in which to meet others. Attractive, diverse and inclusive cities, villages and landscapes all only come into being if all aspects of construction are subject to the demand for high quality.

High-quality construction adds value to our living environment. High quality in this case not only refers to the superior appearance of the built environment but also to the quality of the processes of creation and design and the capabilities and competencies of all those involved in the construction. As a concept of sustainable development, this demand for quality puts a special emphasis on the social function of the built environment. The added value that is aspired to by virtue of high quality is primarily geared towards a broad social impact and is thus of economic relevance. The successful implementation of high quality is measured by way of the following positive effects:

Besides fulfilling some of the fundamental human needs, the built environment shapes, to a great extent, our quality of life. High-quality design of the former can improve the latter and make a significant

¹⁸ European Landscape Convention, Florence 2000: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/176> (accessed 22.11.2017)

¹⁹ Council of Europe: Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage, Faro 2005 <http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/0900001680083746> (accessed 04.09.2017)

²⁰ Council of the European Union: Council Resolution on architectural quality in urban and rural environments (2001/C73/04), 2001 [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001G0306\(03\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001G0306(03)&from=EN) (accessed 16.09.2017); Council of the European Union: Council conclusions on architecture: culture's contribution to sustainable development (2008/C 319/05), 2008 [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52008XG1213\(02\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52008XG1213(02)&from=EN) (accessed 16.09.2017)

contribution to subjective well-being, by meeting the psychological, i.e. cognitive, emotional, social, and, ultimately, cultural needs of human beings. Therefore, it is of central importance for the high quality of the built environment to include these aspects of environmental psychology in the narrower sense, and to explore the relationship of human beings with their built environment, and the effect of each on the other, with the aim of creating humane infrastructural facilities, buildings, cities, villages and landscapes.

The appearance of the built environment is of great significance in terms of its social function. A layout and design that is attuned to the users' specific needs promotes their bond with the built environment, strengthens social cohesion and thus counteracts alienation. Public space, as a place of shared utilisation and interaction, plays an important role in terms of social integration and must therefore stay public. Ensuring the high quality of that space and of its use and frequentation prevents it from being claimed by any one group, and indirectly, but crucially, enhances its safety.

Including the population in decision-making processes promotes the identification of communities with their built environment and strengthens their sense of shared responsibility for their surroundings; on the other hand, however, it also requires the population to have an awareness of questions of quality and construction and the ability to understand them.

Demographic growth and increasing urbanisation make it necessary to devise new ways of living together. Participatory design processes also support the creation of new models of habitat and ensure their socially and economically sustainable adaptability.

The cultural richness of the built environment manifests itself in its grown diversity. Cultural heritage and contemporary creation must be seen as a single entity, which constitutes the cultural value of the built environment. New buildings, infrastructure and public space must be constructed with a regard for the local planning context. Constructions must refer to their surroundings and dialogue dynamically with local features and their characteristics in terms of scale, typology and materiality.

Specific, non-standardised solutions strengthen design variety, thus preventing regional differences from becoming levelled out. Design tradition and technological innovation therefore serve as equal starting points for high-quality contemporary work. High-quality craftsmanship ensures the longevity of the buildings, infrastructure and public space, minimises their upkeep, and thus significantly increases their sustainability.

Topographic, morphological and socio-economic structures shape the character of a city, village or landscape and form the basis of its cultural identity. The authenticity of the built environment is characterised not only by its construction but fundamentally also by its social fabric.

Maintaining an economic dynamic is of vital importance for the quality of a settlement as a living and working environment. High-quality construction assesses the economic and technological requirements from the point of view of their impact on the surrounding built environment and social structures and steers the development in such a way as to safeguard the characteristics essential for cultural identity.

A high-quality built environment also generates long-term economic added value by improving the conditions for positive commercial development. Societal effects, such as a general improvement in wellbeing, lead to stability and promote social cohesion and integration, which in turn improve economic productivity. Moreover, high-quality construction protects the environment and natural resources, with positive results for ensuring the economic development of future generations.²¹ A high-quality built environment is also immediately advantageous from an economic point of view; quality is not a cost driver, but rather a creator of added value. For example, the location and quality of construction is particularly important for local trade and economic sectors such as the property market and tourism. Finally, for the private sector, the importance of a socially and ethically responsible attitude to the quality

²¹ United Nations: Sustainable Buildings and Construction Programme (SBC), 2015

of the built environment cannot be underestimated in terms of its image potential, which can have a direct impact on profits.

A high-quality built environment therefore not only fulfils functional and economic requirements to a high degree but also meets the social and psychological, i.e. cultural needs of its inhabitants and users. It is aesthetically stimulating for its community. The fulfilment of people's cultural needs is influenced by the appearance of the space in which they live. The design of the built environment, the relationships between objects and their built and natural surroundings, spatial coherence, scale, materiality: these are all factors which have a direct impact on people's wellbeing and define the quality of that space. High quality promotes well-being. It is achieved by measures that must be especially defined for each place and can be accomplished in a variety of ways, as long as the locally-specific human requirements of the space and the environment are included among the central goals. Great professional expertise is needed in all disciplines so that these goals can be met to the fullest possible extent. In the process, equal weight must be given to the insights of the sociology and psychology of space. Designing the built environment in this way, placing the needs and well-being of local people centre-stage and debating the issues widely with them, leads to a high quality that must serve as a strategic imperative in any planned construction and development.

4 The concept of *Baukultur*

Baukultur, as an aspect of cultural identity and diversity, holistically embraces every human activity that changes the built environment, including every built and designed asset that is embedded in and relates to the natural environment. *Baukultur* calls for contemporary creation and the existing buildings, infrastructure and public space, including, but not limited to, monuments of cultural heritage, to be understood as a single entity. Thus, *Baukultur* refers to both detailed construction methods and large-scale transformations and developments, embracing traditional and local building skills as well as innovative techniques.

Three central aspects define the overall concept of *Baukultur* underlying the conference and declaration:

1. The existing construction, including cultural heritage assets, and contemporary creation must be understood as a single entity. The existing construction provides an important *Baukultur* reference for the future design of our built environment.
2. All activities with an impact on the built environment, from detailed craftsmanship to the planning and execution of infrastructure projects that have an impact on the landscape, are expressions of *Baukultur*.
3. *Baukultur* not only refers to the built environment but also to the processes involved in its creation.

Since the turn of the millennium, the term "*Baukultur*" has been used in the German-speaking world in this all-encompassing sense. As there is no term with an exact equivalence to this concept in English, the conference will introduce the German term *Baukultur* in English. The German term has been chosen in contradistinction to closely related terms such as *architectural quality*, so as not to limit the concept to architecture alone.

Within the international political context, the fields of cultural heritage conservation, urban development and architecture refer to each other whilst still maintaining their independence and, at times, competing with each other. The cultural value of the quality of the built environment as a whole, with cultural heritage and contemporary creation being understood as a single entity, is hardly ever defined as a political goal. The Davos Declaration is an attempt at addressing this gap by offering an all-encompassing concept of *Baukultur*, which treats the care and preservation of cultural heritage and the extensive shaping of the environment by means of construction and development as a single entity and

formulates cultural expectations with respect to the appearance of our built environment, for the common good.

While the concept of *Baukultur* refers to many activities and processes that impact on the spatial environment, it does not imply any value judgment. The term 'high-quality *Baukultur*', however, expresses the idea of an improved, high-quality built environment.

High-quality *Baukultur* is therefore expressed in the application of conscious, well-debated, high-quality design to all building and landscaping activities, ensuring that cultural values are placed centre-stage and human social and cultural needs are satisfied.

The objective of high-quality *Baukultur* is to create and maintain a high-quality built environment. This quality promotes crucial societal values such as improvements in the quality of life, wellbeing, social cohesion and social integration. High-quality *Baukultur* provides affordable, decent housing, including vibrant and habitable neighbourhoods, and creates the conditions for the generation of positive economic added value.²²

With its vision, that encompasses the entire built environment and is geared towards the common good, the concept of high-quality *Baukultur* adds a crucial aspect to the idea of sustainability.

5 High-quality *Baukultur* as a common good and a shared responsibility

A high-quality *Baukultur* is a common good and thus of public interest. It can only be achieved by a conscious approach to the task involving cooperation between governments and the private sector. All relevant public and private stakeholders must accept joint responsibility.

The role played by public entities, such as states, governments, authorities and administrations, is to establish a framework for a high-quality *Baukultur*. They lead by example and adhere to their own vision of the high-quality *Baukultur* they hope to achieve. In order for this vision to be successful, it must be shared with politicians, the public and economic leaders. All stakeholders, i.e. governments, administrations and organisations, the private sector, business people, scientists and private individuals, experts and the wider public alike, must recognise the common good of a high-quality *Baukultur*, and take ownership of and responsibility for it.

Participatory governance and the associated participation in decision-making processes lead to a better identification with the built environment and thus to a shared responsibility for its design and maintenance.

Ultimately, we are all responsible for the historical and contemporary *Baukultur*, which will be our legacy to future generations. We can have a positive or negative influence on this legacy. Posterity will hold us accountable. A world with a high-quality *Baukultur* is a sustainable world that is worth living in.

²² Council of the European Union: Council conclusions on architecture: culture's contribution to sustainable development (2008/C 319/05), 2008, and Council resolution on architectural quality in urban and rural environments (2001/C 73/04), 2001

6 A call for action: The Davos Declaration 2018

The conference of Ministers of Culture on an all-encompassing *Baukultur*, which views the maintenance and preservation of cultural heritage and the comprehensive design and planning of the built environment as a single entity and which raises cultural expectations regarding the appearance of our built environment, can build on the ongoing international discussion, both in terms of cultural heritage and of current planning, design and construction, and set a new course in this respect.

The Davos Declaration devises a European vision of high-quality *Baukultur*, calls for a joint effort, and outlines possible ways of achieving the goal of establishing a high-quality *Baukultur* for the common good of all European people.

Normative principles and policies

A high-quality *Baukultur* can be attained by explicitly voicing and consistently enforcing the aspiration to achieve high and all-encompassing quality with regard to the built environment. This means that the legal principles of planning, design and construction must include high-quality *Baukultur* as a fundamental goal that is mandatory for all zones and all spatially relevant tasks and includes fair procurement. Future developments have to be committed to high quality standards and to take into consideration pre-existing characteristics. This must not be unnecessarily overridden by purely economic or technical interests.

Strengthening interdisciplinary discourse

Baukultur includes design features as well as functional and social aspects. High-quality *Baukultur* can only be achieved if all relevant disciplines are involved in an interdisciplinary discourse. In particular, the sociology and psychology of space, as well as health implications, must be given considerable weight in planning and construction processes. They make a significant contribution towards more clearly defining and monitoring the high quality aspired to, by adequately reflecting the fulfilment of people's cultural needs. In collaboration with all other experts concerned, this will foster a high-quality formal design, as will interdisciplinary design competitions

Participatory governance

Participatory processes, bottom-up procedures and other quality-assurance measures can promote a high-quality *Baukultur*, provided all participants have the necessary capabilities and competencies. High-quality *Baukultur* requires a strengthening of such relevant participatory processes, which involve a mature and sensitised public. All-encompassing quality-assurance procedures that are monitored and guided by experts from all disciplines concerned and whose results are underpinned by broad consultation and reflection are conducive to a high-quality *Baukultur*.

Education and outreach

The goal of achieving a high-quality *Baukultur* thus requires raising awareness amongst planning, design and building professionals, politicians, economic leaders and the general public, on one hand, and capacity building appropriate to the situation and at an appropriate level on the other. Training curricula should include the concept of a high quality *Baukultur* at all relevant educational levels, promote traditional, technical and professional skills and support innovation. In the area of general education, particular effort must be made with a view to enabling the European public to make judgements on *Baukultur* and design quality. All stakeholders, including the private sector, must take responsibility for the quality of our built environment, which will pass down to future generations as our legacy.

7 Annex: International policies with regard to the built environment

The following survey presents selected international policies, which relate, directly or indirectly, to questions of *Baukultur*. It concentrates on multilateral agreements on a political level and does not include documents such as charters issued by advisory or expert bodies. The presented policies form both the context of and an important foundation for the Davos Declaration. A review of these texts will make clear the gaps in the discussion to date and thus the necessity for the Davos Declaration, which highlights the quality of the built environment and the concept of high-quality *Baukultur* as key themes for the development of the European built environment.

United Nations

New Urban Agenda. United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban development. Habitat III Quito 17 – 20 October 2016

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN Habitat, adopted a New Urban Agenda at the Habitat III Conference in 2016, which outlines general development goals and focuses on questions of governance, social cohesion and the environment. Because of the increasing worldwide urbanisation, urban areas are seen as most in need of action. The agenda includes high-quality public spaces as a contribution to sustainability and thus to the quality of life of inhabitants. The New Urban Agenda acknowledges the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

<http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>

Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, New York, 25 September 2015

As part of its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN has agreed on a number of goals and targets. Goal 11 strives to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. It aims at access to safe and affordable housing and transport, enhancement of participatory, integrated and inclusive settlement planning and urban development, protection and safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage, provision of inclusive and accessible green and public spaces.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>

Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Aarhus, 25 June 1998

The Aarhus Convention’s goal is to protect the human right to live in a healthy environment. It defines people’s rights to access environmental information and promotes public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters.

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf>

UNESCO

The Hangzhou Declaration. Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies. Hangzhou International Congress, China, 15 - 17 May 2013

The Hangzhou Declaration stresses the crucial role of culture for sustainable development, peace and security and advocates the full integration of culture in all development policies and programmes.

<http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/images/FinalHangzhouDeclaration20130517.pdf>

Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Paris, 10 November 2011

The special value of historic urban areas is highlighted by UNESCO's Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. This recognises cultural heritage as an important contributor to the quality of life, promoting economic development and strengthening social cohesion in a changing global environment. It proposes the integration of strategies for the conservation, management and planning of historic urban areas into local and urban development processes in order to counteract rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation.

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=48857&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Paris, 17 October 2003

The convention's aim is to safeguard and to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of communities, groups and individuals. In the context of the convention, intangible cultural heritage encompasses not only practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills but also associated instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces. The convention encourages the transmission of knowledge and skills and promotes cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Paris, 16 November 1972

The World Cultural Heritage Convention aims to preserve for future generations natural and cultural heritage of extraordinary universal value, as part of the world heritage of humankind as a whole. The most important tool in achieving this is the list of world heritage sites.

<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>

Convention for the Protection of Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), The Hague, 14 May 1954

The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict aims to prevent cultural heritage from being destroyed or damaged during war or armed conflict and protect it from looting and other forms of illegal seizure. Two protocols with additional agreements were adopted in 1954 and 1999 respectively. Besides the rules that are intended to guarantee the protection of and respect for cultural heritage during armed conflict, the agreement also includes peacetime safeguarding measures such as the preparation of inventories and emergency measures.²³

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/armed-conflict-and-heritage/convention-and-protocols/1954-hague-convention/>

²³ The Hague Convention was adopted in the wake of large-scale destruction during the Second World War. In recent years several resolutions have been passed in similar circumstances, which deal with the effects of terrorism on the cultural heritage in the Middle East and Africa, cf. e.g. the UN Security Council Resolution 2249, 2015: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2249.pdf (accessed 18.09.2017); the UN Human Rights Council Resolution 233/20, 2016 <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/33/20> (accessed 31.08.2017). At a European level: Council of Europe "The role of culture and cultural heritage in conflict prevention, transformation, resolution and postconflict action: the Council of Europe Approach", AT (2010) 397 rev.1, 18 January 2011: <https://edoc.coe.int/en/european-cultural-convention/5785-the-role-of-culture-and-cultural-heritage-in-conflict-prevention-transformation-resolution-and-postconflict-action-the-council-of-europe-approach.html> (accessed 13.09.2017)

Council of Europe

European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century (The Namur Strategy), 2017

In 2017, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted with its recommendation (CM/rec(2017)1) the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century as drafted by the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) in 2016. The strategy harks back to the Conference of Ministers of the Council of Europe organised by Belgium in 2015 in Namur, adopting the Namur Declaration. It aims to promote good governance and social participation in cultural heritage and thus improve its positive impact on society.

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/strategy-21>

<https://rm.coe.int/16806a89ae>

Napflion Declaration: Promoting Territorial Democracy in Spatial Planning, 2014. Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT), Napflion, 17 June 2014

The Napflion Declaration provides guidelines for leveraging the potential of participatory democracy in spatial planning. The declaration sets up a framework in which people can express informed opinions regarding spatial plans that affect them directly or indirectly and can influence, to varying degrees, the spatial plans of their territories.

<http://www.ectp-ceu.eu/images/stories/PDF->

[docs/16th%20CEMAT%20Naphlio%20declaration%202014.pdf](http://www.ectp-ceu.eu/images/stories/PDF-docs/16th%20CEMAT%20Naphlio%20declaration%202014.pdf)

Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, Faro, 27 October 2005

The Faro Convention emphasises the important aspects of heritage as they relate to human rights and democracy. It defines cultural heritage as an important resource for the promotion of cultural variety and the sustainable development of society, the economy and the environment. It calls for the creation of a framework that puts cultural heritage at the centre of societal attention and strengthens public access to and participation in cultural heritage.

<https://rm.coe.int/1680083746>

Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent. European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT), Hanover 7-8 November 2000

The Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent are aimed, in particular, at bringing the economic and social requirements to be met by Europe into harmony with its ecological and cultural functions and at contributing in this way to long-term, large-scale and balanced spatial development. In this context, they emphasise the importance of the built cultural heritage for sustainable development. They stress that it is not only conservation of the past that is challenged, but also the harmony between modern architecture, urban design and cultural heritage.

http://www.mdrap.ro/_documente/dezvoltare_teritoriala/documente_strategice/Sustainable%20Spatial%20Development.pdf

European Landscape Convention, Florence, 20 October 2000

The European Landscape Convention is based on a broad understanding of landscape. It encompasses all levels of landscape, including natural, rural, urban and suburban landscapes. Besides addressing beautiful or protected landscapes it also underlines the importance of the quality of landscape for the preservation of the diverse natural and cultural European heritage in general. It gives an impetus to the adoption of gentler treatment of the entire landscape, which is gaining importance, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas.

<https://rm.coe.int/1680080621>

Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (European Treaty Series – No. 121). Granada, 3 October 1985

The Granada Convention addresses the importance of the quality of the built environment. Its main purpose is to enhance Europe's cultural heritage through the promotion of conservation policies. It is the first document to include the principles of integrated conservation. It stresses that architectural heritage constitutes an irreplaceable expression of the diversity of the European cultural heritage and establishes the principles of "European coordination of conservation policies" including exchanges on ways of promoting architectural creation as a contemporary contribution to the European cultural heritage.

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168007a087>

European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter. European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT), Torremolinos, 20 May 1983

The goal of the Torremolinos Charter is to strengthen and foster cooperation and the interchange of information concerning spatial planning. It stresses the contribution of regional/spatial planning to a European identity through better spatial organisation in Europe. It emphasises that all European citizens should be enabled to participate in regional/spatial planning measures.

https://www.are.admin.ch/dam/are/de/dokumente/internationales/dokumente/bericht/european_regionalspatialplanningchartertorremolinoscharter.pdf.download.pdf/european_regionalspatialplanningchartorremolinoscharter.pdf

European Cultural Convention, Paris, 19 December 1954

The European Cultural Convention was the basis of the concept of a joint European cultural heritage and laid the foundation for cultural-political collaboration in post-war Europe. The convention aims to promote mutual understanding between the peoples of Europe and ensure the appreciation of different cultures.

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/018>

European Union

Urban Agenda for the EU 'Pact of Amsterdam'. Informal Meeting of EU Ministers responsible for Urban Matters, Amsterdam, 30 May 2016

The Pact of Amsterdam aims at sustainable policies for the living environment and establishes an Urban Agenda for the EU. The Pact of Amsterdam refers to social, planning and financial aspects of the built environment.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/pact-of-amsterdam.pdf

Council conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage (2014/C 463/01). The Council of the European Union, 23 December 2014

With reference to the Council conclusions of 21 May 2014 on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe, these Council conclusions promote a more participatory approach to cultural policy-making.

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XG1223\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XG1223(01)&from=EN)

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe (COM (2014) 477 final). European Commission, Brussels, 22 July 2014

The Communication emphasises the influence of cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe. It stresses the importance of strong cooperation between the countries to strengthen the contribution of cultural heritage to sustainable growth and employment.
http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/publications/2014-heritage-communication_en.pdf

Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe. Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting, Brussels, 21 May 2014

The Conclusions emphasise the role of cultural heritage as an irreplaceable and precious resource for Europe. The document further states that cultural heritage enhances the quality of life, promotes social inclusion and, by virtue of its economic influence, supports the sustainable development and regeneration of rural and urban areas.
https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142705.pdf

Council conclusions on architecture: culture's contribution to sustainable development (2008/C 319/05). The Council of the European Union, 20 November 2008

The Conclusions highlight the cultural relevance of architecture and emphasise the contribution of culture to sustainable development. They call for all political stakeholders to take the cultural component of architecture into account and view high-quality architecture as a factor in economic dynamics.²⁴
[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52008XG1213\(02\)&from=DE](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52008XG1213(02)&from=DE)

Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities. Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion 24-25 May 2007, Leipzig

The Leipzig Charter focuses on integrated policies of urban development, and promotes the creation and maintenance of high-quality public spaces. High-quality architecture is understood as a necessity for the city as a whole and its surroundings.
http://www.espon-usespon.eu/dane/web_usespon_library_files/1244/leipzig_charter_on_sustainable_european_cities.pdf

Council resolution of 12 February 2001 on architectural quality in urban and rural environments (2001/C 73/04). The Council of the European Union, 12 February 2001

The Council resolution centres on the demand for a high-quality built environment. It states that high-quality architecture improves citizens' living environments and their relationship with their rural and urban surroundings, and makes an effective contribution to social cohesion, the creation of jobs, the promotion of cultural tourism, and regional economic development.²⁵
[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001G0306\(03\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001G0306(03)&from=EN)

ESDP European Spatial Development Perspective. Informal Council of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning, Potsdam, 11 May 1999

The ESDP sees cultural diversity as one of the most important factors in the development of the EU and sees Europe's cultural heritage as an expression of the European identity. The formulated principles include a polycentric spatial development, a new relationship between urban and rural areas, and careful management of nature and cultural heritage.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/pdf/sum_en.pdf

²⁴ The *Survey on Architectural Policies in Europe. European Forum for Architectural Policies, Brussels, July 2012* reviews the impact of the Conclusion 2008/C 319/05 and the Resolution 2001/C 73/04: http://www.efap-fepa.org/docs/EFAP_Survey_Book_2012.pdf

²⁵ Cf. note 23