



# International Council on Monuments and Sites

Advisory and Executive Committee Meetings  
Scientific Symposium 2010 'Social Change'

26 - 31 October 2010  
Dublin, Ireland

Skellig Michael, A World Heritage Site

## Scientific Symposium Information

IC  MOS Ireland

The International Council on  
Monuments and Sites

<http://conference.icomosireland.ie>

## Changing World, Changing Views of Heritage: The Impact of Global Change on Cultural Heritage 2010 Theme: Heritage and Social Change

Saturday, 30 October 2010

Dublin Castle Conference Centre, Dublin, Ireland

### Background

In Quebec City, Canada, on the occasion of the Scientific Council meeting in September 2008 at the 16th ICOMOS General Assembly, a task force of 14, representing 14 of 28 International Scientific Committees and two National Committee Presidents, met to debate and propose the themes for the next two Advisory Committee meeting Scientific Symposia. The themes selected evolve from the ongoing interdisciplinary research on Global Climate Change and its effects on cultural heritage, and build on the 2007 Pretoria Scientific Symposium on this topic. They were presented to the Advisory Committee and adopted at the 16th General Assembly. The theme for 2009 was Technological Change, held in Valletta, Malta on 7 October 2009, and for 2010, Social Change. The three change themes are intended to address ICOMOS challenges in a rapidly changing world.

The ICOMOS Symposium on Social Change also coincides with UNESCO's adoption of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and ICOMOS' choice of Agricultural Heritage as the theme for the 2010 International Day for Monuments and Sites on 18 April.



### Context

Social Change lies at the heart of newly emerging heritage paradigms that are often focused more on community-based significance criteria and involvement than on the interventions of outside heritage professionals. The 21st century has witnessed far-reaching political, economic, and cultural transformations that combine industrialisation, mass migration, regional fragmentation, ethnic tensions, and the fluctuations of transnational markets, all of which transcend and permeate traditional political and cultural boundaries. How do all these changes affect the foundations of heritage practice? How do they mesh with existing national legislation and international conventions based on territorially-bound traditions and concepts of universal significance?

In the same way that Global Climate Change is altering familiar landscapes and environmental relations, and Technological Change is transforming communication and information networks, the social changes of massively shifting populations, unprecedented industrial development, and dramatically changing lifestyles and landscapes are creating new local and global cultural hybrids all over the world.

Do these effects of Social Change demand new approaches to cultural heritage? Can it take into account the reality of cultural and social change? Are the challenges posed by Social Change interwoven with the simultaneous influences of Technological and Global Climate Change? Do they all require new management frameworks and criteria of significance and authenticity? Indeed how should the very concepts of "integrity" and "significance" of cultural landscapes and historic towns and villages, for example, be addressed when so many of them are now the scene of dramatic demographic transformations in the form of gentrification, commercial exploitation, the arrival of expanding immigrant communities, or conversely, depopulation?

### The 2010 Symposium will highlight the following themes in its examination of Social Change

#### 1. Heritage of Changing/Evolving Communities

To what extent does heritage conservation and management retard or accelerate other social processes? How can heritage "sustainability" be defined in social terms? Does World Heritage listing create unanticipated pressures on the contemporary communities that surround them? In fact, does World Heritage listing destroy the traditional social context of small living sites? How can heritage "conservation" become a part of future-oriented development? Has traditional heritage practice served to create boundaries rather than bridges between states, regions, and ethnic communities? Should contemporary social changes (demographic, economic, cultural) contribute to evolving concepts of significance?

#### 2. Diasporic, Immigrant, and Indigenous Heritage

In a world of movement, migrations, and cultural diversity, how can monuments and intangible heritage be honoured and appreciated by scattered communities, often in very different cultural contexts? Does the heritage of indigenous and aboriginal communities require special management and interpretive methods? Should the history and traditions of immigrants become part of the heritage of the host country? How should heritage professionals deal with the reality of the major demographic changes now occurring throughout the world?

#### 3. Religious Heritage

The social significance of religious practice is changing: in some places, becoming less a part of daily routines and in other regions very much more. What is the relationship between active religious observance and heritage monuments? Is ritual an obstruction, a privileged activity, or a common human heritage meant to be accessible and viewable by all? Religious traditions are often more visible than ever, and geographically over-lap to an unprecedented degree. As a consequence, religious monuments, places of worship, pilgrimage routes, and sacred places often become both heritage tourist attractions and the objects of conflict and ownership dispute. What role can religion play in 21st century heritage practice? Likewise, can heritage play a constructive role in encouraging coexistence between faiths?

#### 4. The Social Impacts of Global Climate Change

Following up on the earlier Global Climate Change discussions of the Scientific Council, how does climate change affect human settlements and economic patterns in a way that indirectly impacts cultural heritage? The earlier symposium dealt with direct threats posed by Global Climate Change on tangible heritage resources, but here we may deal with its effect on intangible traditions as well. What change in significance does a monument undergo when its environmental context shifts? How can the heritage profession adopt new interpretive and administrative techniques for dealing with an environmentally, economically, and culturally changing world?

There are many questions posed in this discussion, primarily because contemporary Social Change is so complex and far reaching-and it interacts with Technological and Global Climate Change in unpredictable ways. As cultural heritage is created by people and valued by people, the changes in lifestyles, values, and economics will undoubtedly have significant impacts on both the form and significance of heritage.

Through the Scientific Council's research on Global Climate Change, we have concluded that it is going to produce a heritage of loss. Through the subsequent symposium on Technological Change, we have concluded that technology is a double-edged sword that needs to be approached with caution. The goals of the 2010 Symposium will be to integrate all three aspects of change to begin the formulation of a practical agenda for ICOMOS in the coming years.



### Symposium Format

The Dublin symposium will be based on the Pretoria and Valletta models. Papers and poster presentations have been solicited through the Scientific Council listserv and National Committees. Paper abstracts and poster proposals have been blind peer-reviewed and the selection process is closed. Once the Editorial group has finalized its review of the authors' full papers, they will be posted on the meeting web site.

Of the 30+ papers submitted, six have been selected for presentation during the morning session of the Dublin symposium. Posters have been accepted according to available space and the blind peer-review process. The afternoon will be devoted to breakout sessions wherein working groups will be asked to reflect on a specific question and how it relates to their International Scientific Committee. The morning session will be open to the general public (up to the limit of the available seating), whereas the afternoon session will not. The breakout groups will return for a final plenary session to present each group's recommendations which will then be synthesized into formal recommendations to be distributed and published on the ICOMOS website in due course.

### Further Information and Registration

The final programme and up-dates for the Scientific Symposium will be posted in due course on the web site <http://conference.icomosireland.ie>. The full papers will be made available on-line in September.

ICOMOS Delegates, Invited Guests and Observers should refer to the Delegate Information Pack for further information and registration for the entire meeting programme.

# Advisory and Executive Committee Meetings 2010

All information documents and the registration form are available for download on <http://conference.icomosireland.ie>. For any queries relating to registration, accommodation, payment and the social programme please contact

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## Symposium Committees

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