

International conference

MODELS FOR MANAGEMENT OF HISTORICAL TOWNS REVITALIZATION
AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Possibilities for Revitalization and Conservation of the Old Town of Ivanić
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Models for Management of Historical Towns Revitalization and Development Processes

[Introduction]

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This year's international scientific and professional conference *Models for management of historical towns revitalization and development processes* is taking place as the fourth conference within the project *Restoration and sustainable development of small historic towns in Croatia* by Croatian section of ECOVAST. Heritage of small historic towns, as age-old tradition of urbanism, has been recognized as an important part of Croatian spatial identity and in the same time it represents the potential for growth and development of new quality of life within them.



The subtitle of this year's conference - *Example of Ivanić-Grad: Possibility of revitalization and restoration of old Ivanić-Grad* emerged from the cooperation of Croatian section of ECOVAST with the local association *Prijatelji baštine – Amici hereditatis* from Ivanić-Grad. *Prijatelji baštine* (Friends of Heritage) have been undertaking numerous activities in Ivanić-Grad for several years now, with the purpose to recognize the values of local cultural

heritage, its protection and creative use in modern life of Ivanić-Grad and in contemplating the future development. Along with general themes of protection and restoration of historic town, this year's conference places special emphasis on the local themes of Ivanić-Grad and its region, which are discussed in the special section of the conference.

The goal of this conference is to initiate a systematic care of historic towns, which represent important carriers of spatial identity of Croatia, through development and bringing clear strategy of their renewal: on local, county and state level. Promotion of scientific and professional research, opening debates for all involved and interested parties: population, local self-government, administrative bodies, scientists and professionals of various disciplines whose interests are met on complex territories of historic town, purpose of which is to form joint attitudes on methods and activities which would stop the deterioration and to incite renovation and improvement of life in small historic towns. The conference is a continuation of previous conferences organized by Croatian section of ECOVAST (Samobor 2007, Mošćenice 2009, Tuheljske Toplice 2010).

In spite of financial and recession problems, this international conference managed to gather 35 professionals and scientists with the total of 23 papers from the country and abroad, proving that there is a wide interest and need for acting in the domain of urban renovation, because delicate construction structures of historic towns, without appropriate maintenance and restoration, change their characteristics and disappear. Participants from many academic and professional disciplines: architects, sociologists, planners (urbanists), conservators, economists, geographers and professionals in ethnology, art history and tourism have joined the conference. The authors warned about the importance of small towns (which in Croatia and Europe are mostly historic) not just because they are the homes to a significant part of total population of specific region or country, but also because of the important role that small towns have in relation to rural areas that surround them.

Starting points for conference conclusions (based on written papers):

Conclusions and recommendations presented on scientific and professional conference held in Mošćenice in 2009 which were referred to the competent Ministries still remain current and long-term programme with the main purpose of restoration and revitalisation of small historic towns in Croatia. This year's reports confirm the most of strategic conclusions but continue to elaborate in more detail the issues related to the methods of planning and implementation of restoration.

Based on expositions and written releases, it was concluded:

1. Small historic towns are important due to the fact that significant part of total population of certain region or country inhabits them, due to their role in preservation of local identities as well as important role that small towns have together with their functions and facilities in relation to rural areas surrounding them.
2. Causes to the present unsatisfactory conditions of small towns are numerous. Large share of responsibility is on professionals involved in the planning processes (planners, architects, conservators, landscape architects, engineers in different fields and professional workers of local administration) who don't realize the completeness of a historic town and don't recognize the values or potentials of the area.
3. Coverage of the areas in spatial planning and conservatory documentation does not guarantee their successful implementation. Existing system of urban plans is not adjusted to historical communities, and the existing system of obligatory involvement of including the public in planning processes should be upgraded by active participation with finding of articulation model and protection of public interest.
4. Planning and implementation of spatial and urban and other development plans is lacking the systematic and integral approach which should ensure active participation of all stakeholders (with active participation of local public, owners and professionals from different disciplines) and to strive to their implementation with obligatory defining of financing models, solution models and proprietary legal relations and models of permanent financial sustainability of restoration programme.
5. While evaluating the historic structures and bringing strategic decisions of restoration of a historic town, professional researches need to be connected to the attitudes of other players: citizens at first, business owners, civil society associations, institutions, politicians, professional and administrative bodies, professionals in town administration which bring decisions important for the functioning and development of the town and are actively involved in the processes of their transformation.

6. Special attention must be paid to the permanent education and raising awareness of the values of historical heritage, and potentials that such heritage represents for the town development in its wider spatial context. Such awareness, with active participation of public in all the processes, can become an efficient protection mechanism of current qualities of local environment. Role of local cultural associations of citizens is important.
7. Investing into the restoration of protected settlements and buildings should be improved by tax benefits and other instruments of financing and support (professional and financial) in time of applying for available financing programmes.
8. Quality models of restoration of cultural property as drivers and the base for the development of tourism are those which are acceptable, while it is important that the development of tourism does not ruin the harmony of social and economic conditions of life and the town identity. Complex relationship of culture and forming of local identities includes creation of new "attractors of events" in new or remodelled buildings, material cultural facilities which transfer "local messages" and meaning and non-materialized expression of local culture which inevitably intertwine with tourism. Small historic towns must find their place on tourist market by using their own authenticity.
9. Development based on the development of tourism is not the only model that should be cultivated in post-industrial periods such as Croatian, and tourism as a mono-culture carries certain dangers with it. In contemplating the future of small historic towns, one should include the projects that will be directed to the restoration of economic base of town and which can function as development catalysts of local communities.
10. Basis strategic goals should respect specificities of location. The purpose of revitalisation is not always complete reconstruction of historical forms or elements but to find the solution for reading historic content, signs and symbols in structure and cultural scenery of the settlement. History of the location carries symbolic emotional charge and the potential that can be and should be an inspiration for creating new values.