

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Recommendation Rec(2005)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the governance and management of university heritage

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 December 2005
at the 950th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

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

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity among its members and that this aim can be pursued notably by common action in educational and cultural matters;

Having regard to the European Cultural Convention of 1954 (ETS No. 18);

Having regard to the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention) (ETS No. 121) and to the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised) (Valletta Convention) (ETS No. 143);

Having regard to the Final Declaration and the Action Plan adopted by the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (October 1997);

Having regard to the "Europe, a Common Heritage" campaign, undertaken between 1999 and 2000 on the decision of the Second Summit, and in particular to the project on the heritage of European universities within this campaign;

Having regard to the Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education signed in Bologna on 19 June 1999 launching the Bologna Process of higher education reform aiming to establish a European Higher Education Area by 2010;

Considering that the heritage of European universities encompasses elements of key importance to higher education today, such as academic and institutional autonomy, the ability to adapt and renew while preserving core values of independent scholarship, and freedom of teaching and learning, and that these are fully compatible with the values of the Council of Europe;

Considering that university autonomy is an integral part of the heritage of European universities and one of the key principles of higher education in Europe;

Considering that this very university autonomy has confirmed the uniqueness of university heritage;

Considering that cultural heritage is the subject of international legal instruments, such as the Granada and Valletta Conventions, that address general issues of cultural heritage without specific reference to the heritage of universities;

Considering that the responsibility for the governance and management of the university heritage is shared between governments, other public authorities at national, regional and local levels and higher education institutions;

Considering the role played in the governance and management of university heritage by non-governmental organisations at international, national and regional levels;

Considering that the newer standard-setting texts on cultural heritage within the context of the Council of Europe provide a wider definition of the concept of cultural heritage with more emphasis on beliefs, perceptions, traditions and concepts that make reference to intellectual heritage;

Having regard to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 14 May 1954 and its Second Protocol of 26 March 1999, the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 17 October 2003 and the World Intellectual Property Organisation's normative texts directly related to intellectual heritage, such as the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works;

Considering that cultural heritage is subject to national legislation, most of which deals with heritage in broader terms rather than specific aspects of heritage, such as university heritage and that, in some countries, higher education legislation may contain provisions that are also relevant to university heritage, but that there is little or no synergy between these two categories of laws;

Considering that no international standards exist specifically for university heritage and that policies and strategies for the protection of this heritage are highly diverse and range from fully developed structures to an absence of definition of management responsibilities other than informal precedent;

Considering that higher education institutions have a double mission as concerns training in heritage: on the one hand, they have a mission to train high level specialists in all heritage-related fields, while on the other hand, they also have a mission to provide training in the specific heritage of universities for both heritage specialists and members of the academic community specialising in other areas;

Considering that the European dimension is an integral part of university heritage, and vice versa, that universities are, by their history, their heritage and their current activities, European and international institutions par excellence, and that the European dimension should guide all activities related to university heritage,

Recommends that the governments of member states:

- a. take steps to implement in their policy, law and practice the principles set out in the appendix to this recommendation;
- b. promote the implementation of the principles and measures contained in the appendix where this is not the direct responsibility of governments;
- c. promote the implementation of these measures by relevant public authorities at all levels as well as higher education institutions;
- d. ensure that this recommendation is distributed as widely as possible among all persons and bodies concerned.

Appendix to Recommendation Rec(2005)13

Scope

1. The present recommendation aims to set out guidelines for and good practice in the governance and management of the heritage of European universities.
2. The provisions of this recommendation are applicable to higher education institutions and bodies seeking to adhere to the traditions and values that this heritage represents as defined in the present recommendation, and that assume responsibility for the protection and enhancement of these traditions and values as a common European heritage, regardless of the age of these institutions.
3. This recommendation is addressed to governments. However, in view of the shared responsibility for the governance and management of university heritage, its provisions may be implemented not only by governments, but also by other public authorities at national, regional and local levels, higher education institutions and public bodies responsible for the management and protection of cultural heritage, as the case may be.

Definitions

University/higher education institution

4. For the purposes of the present recommendation, the terms “university” and “higher education institution” shall designate an establishment providing higher education and being recognised by the competent authority as belonging to its system of higher education. For the purposes of the present text, the terms shall be used indiscriminately, even if it is realised that in some higher education systems, a formal and/or legal distinction is made between various kinds of higher education institutions, and that the right to the use of the term “university” may be protected by law.

Heritage of universities

5. For the purposes of this recommendation, the “heritage of universities” shall be understood to encompass all tangible and intangible heritage related to higher education institutions, bodies and systems as well as to the academic community of scholars and students, and the social and cultural environment of which this heritage is a part. The “heritage of universities” is understood as being all tangible and intangible traces of human activity relating to higher education. It is an accumulated source of wealth with direct reference to the academic community of scholars and students, their beliefs, values, achievements and their social and cultural function as well as modes of transmission of knowledge and capacity for innovation.

Institutional heritage policies

6. The heritage of European universities concerns individual higher education institutions as well as the academic community of scholars and students collectively, and European society at large. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to establish transparent institutional policies for protecting and raising awareness of their heritage both within the institutions and in the larger society. In so doing, institutions could make explicit their understanding, preservation and enhancement of their heritage and the goals for its conservation and for raising awareness of it, as well as specify the structure, instruments and means with which the institution intends to implement these policies, including its decision-making structures and a clear planning process.

Legislative framework

7. Competent public authorities and higher education institutions should be encouraged to make full use of existing laws and of external and internal regulations for the protection and preservation of the heritage of universities.

8. Competent public authorities and higher education institutions should, however, be encouraged to review their laws and/or internal regulations with a view to adopting adequate provisions to protect their heritage where such do not already exist. In their internal regulations, universities should be encouraged to take account of possible measures for protecting and raising awareness of the heritage of universities as outlined in the present recommendation through legislation as well as guidelines established by professional organisations.

9. The status of the university heritage and parts thereof should be clarified through law or internal university regulations, as the case may be.

Heritage governance and management at higher education institutions

10. University leaders should be encouraged to consider all parts of the heritage of a higher education institution as falling under their ultimate legal, administrative and moral responsibility.

11. Universities should be encouraged to define, as appropriate in the context of the particular institution, the political and administrative responsibility for the university heritage as well as appropriate reporting mechanisms.

12. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to make their goals and policies for the university heritage explicit, for example through the adoption of a heritage charter for the institution or a specific heritage plan.

13. Institutions and units managing parts of the university heritage, such as museums, collections, libraries, archives, building services or university departments, should be encouraged to make explicit their goals and policies for the parts of the university heritage that fall under their responsibility, taking due account of the overall heritage policies of the higher education institution of which they are a part.

14. The management of the university heritage and parts thereof should conform to the best national and international standards established by competent heritage bodies or authorities within or outside of the university.

15. In considering major overall decisions and developments, including strategic plans for the institution, plans for the use of its buildings and their surroundings and other development plans, elected bodies as well as the administration of higher education institutions should be encouraged to give explicit consideration to the impact of such plans and decisions on the university heritage.

16. Universities should be encouraged to make acquisitions, bequests, loans, deposits and disposals an integral part of institutional policy and allow them to benefit from adequate conservation measures and administrative and financial safeguards, including insurance policies.

Finance

17. The financing of the policies for university heritage falls under the shared responsibility of government and of higher education institutions. In systems with public financing of higher education – whether entirely or partially – the competent public authorities should include provisions for the financing of the policies for the university heritage in the budgets allocated to higher education institutions. The institutions should in their turn be encouraged to make provision for the financing of their heritage policies within their own budget, whether publicly or privately funded, and seek to obtain additional funding from external sources.

18. Higher education institutions and bodies should be encouraged to provide and maintain suitable physical accommodation for their heritage and to provide balanced and reasonable funding for its protection and enhancement.

19. To the extent that the upkeep and protection of university heritage is financed through the general university budget, rather than through earmarked provisions from public or other sources, higher education institutions should be encouraged to set up the budget in such a way as to make it possible to identify the appropriations for heritage purposes.

20. Where required, institutions should be encouraged to seek supplementary external funds to enhance their heritage and implement their heritage policies. Such funds may be sought from local, regional, national or international sources.

Access

21. As far as compatible with the main missions of the university and with international and national standards of ethical practice, universities should be encouraged to make their heritage accessible to members of the academic community and/or the general public, as appropriate.

22. In some cases, access may need to be restricted in order to protect and conserve specific parts of this heritage or for reasons that have to do with the research and teaching of the institution. In such cases, institutions should be encouraged to make every effort to achieve a reasonable balance between heritage conservation needs, the needs of research and teaching and the desirability of providing wide access for the general public. However, at no time should the conservation of university heritage be endangered by institutional policies concerning access to this heritage.

23. Institutions should be encouraged to give access to their university heritage for members of the general public at affordable prices and within reasonable opening hours.

24. Higher education institutions and bodies should be encouraged to take appropriate measures to safeguard and protect their heritage.

25. As far as possible and in accordance with their general heritage policies, universities should be encouraged to take appropriate measures and develop methods for the promotion of the value, nature and interest of this heritage today.

Professionalisation

26. Higher education institutions, in co-operation with ministries or agencies responsible for higher education and cultural heritage and/or relevant professional organisations, as appropriate, should be encouraged to consider qualifications requirements, career structures and professional development plans for different categories of staff working on university heritage. In particular, they should be encouraged to credit academic staff with appropriate academic merit for their work with museums, collections, archives, libraries and other academic work related to university heritage.

27. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to consider elaborating specific instructions for heritage-related posts, emphasising the specific professional requirements.

28. They should be encouraged to advertise internationally at least those heritage-related posts that require a high level of heritage expertise, with a view to making it possible to fill some posts with foreign experts. Governments should take steps to abolish any remaining legislation stipulating that certain posts at higher education institutions or heritage institutions may only be filled by nationals.

29. Higher education institutions and bodies as well as ministries responsible for higher education and/or cultural heritage should seek to set up fora and networks, both nationally and internationally, for professional exchange and development among heritage professionals working on university heritage.

Training

30. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to establish training programmes in heritage-related fields. They should aim to provide balanced competences and skills combining an overview and a common-heritage approach with training in the specific knowledge and skills required of the various heritage-related professions as well as “instrumental” skills and, as far as possible, should be integrated with and draw on existing heritage units at the institution.

31. Students in heritage-related fields should be strongly encouraged to train for at least one semester at a foreign university, and universities should be encouraged to make every effort to recognise the period spent at a foreign institution as part of the degree to be earned from the student’s home institution. Higher education institutions should also be encouraged to seek co-operation with other institutions with a view to offering joint, advanced-level heritage courses involving staff and students from several universities.

Research

32. With due regard for the principle of institutional autonomy and for the freedom of academic staff to select the topics of their own research, higher education institutions should encourage research on heritage by their own staff as well as by other qualified researchers, taking an interdisciplinary and comparative approach and, as appropriate, seeking to co-ordinate such research.

33. Research councils, international research programmes, foundations and other bodies funding research should be encouraged to support programmes and projects to further research both on heritage in general and more specifically on the heritage of universities, in particular programmes and projects involving specialists from a variety of disciplines (conservation, restoration, inventories, core data systems and applied high technology) and/or from a variety of higher education institutions from various countries.

34. Higher education institutions and bodies should be encouraged to make all parts of their heritage available for research purposes in so far as this does not entail a risk for the conservation of this heritage. In the latter case, they should be encouraged to seek alternative solutions for the proper use of this heritage for research purposes.

Awareness raising

35. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to make focused efforts to raise awareness of their heritage in the academic community of scholars and students, in their local communities, among political decision makers and in civil society at large.

36. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to include in their awareness-raising efforts activities which aim to improve knowledge and understanding of their heritage among pupils and teachers at schools, in particular local schools, in order to help them identify with this heritage and see it as a part of the heritage of their community and region as well as a part of the common heritage of Europe.

37. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to develop policies and strategies for co-operating with media on a regular basis to raise awareness of their university heritage. They should also be encouraged to prepare publications on their history and heritage and to aim at least some of them at general readers and be available at an affordable price.

38. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to provide staff members responsible for communication, external relations and awareness-raising activities with a background in the heritage of the institution as well as in the heritage of European universities.

Relations with the local community

39. True to their mission of teaching, research and awareness raising, higher education institutions should, in general terms, be encouraged to seek to develop and maintain close connections with the local communities of which they are a part and offer their services and expertise to these communities as appropriate.

40. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to seek to develop close relations with local authorities as well as with civil society in the communities in which they are located. Local and regional authorities should, for their part, also be encouraged to seek to develop and maintain close relations with higher education institutions in their area.

International co-operation

41. Governments should encourage universities as well as relevant public authorities to explore and make use of all possibilities to establish European and international co-operation activities in heritage-related fields, including, as appropriate, programmes of international organisations and institutions, such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the European Union, the European Science Foundation, University Museums and Collections (UMAC), International Council of Museums (ICOM/ICOMOS) or the International Council on Archives (ICA), regional co-operation programmes, university networks and bilateral university co-operation.

42. In the same way, universities should be encouraged to promote heritage research projects, including a comparative and/or European dimension, in particular where such projects include co-operation between staff at various European universities.

43. Governments should encourage higher education institutions as well as relevant public authorities to make full use of the opportunities offered for increased international co-operation within the framework of a European higher education area and of Council of Europe conventions and other legal instruments.