



OVPM . OWHC . OCPM

SECRETARÍA REGIONAL
EUROPA DEL SUR / MEDITERRÁNEO
CÓRDOBA
ESPAÑA

PRESS RELEASE

18TH OWHC SOUTHERN EUROPE AND MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND “ECONOMICS OF HERITAGE” WORKSHOP

The First World Heritage Cities Craft Market will be held in Granada, 21-23 December 2018.

The defence of local craftsmanship as a means of combating the visual contamination of our historic city centres and safeguarding small retailers, the importance of young people in protecting and managing heritage, mobility as a transversal way of making our historic districts more pleasant for inhabitants and visitors alike and analysing the economic impact and the funding opportunities currently available to heritage are central themes in the work of World Heritage Cities.

The 18th Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) Southern Europe and Mediterranean regional conference was held in Córdoba from 19 to 21 November, accompanied by a training workshop on “The Economics of Heritage”, with representatives of the following cities in attendance: Aranjuez, Brussels, Cidade Velha, Córdoba, Cuenca, Elvas, Évora, Granada, Oporto, Oviedo, Mostar, Segovia, Sintra, Tarragona, Úbeda and Vienna. With this regional conference we fulfilled our commitment under the OWHC regulations requiring regional secretariats to arrange periodic encounters for all the cities in the region.

Isabel Ambrosio, the mayor of Córdoba, which is the city that hosts the regional secretariat, and the Secretary General of the OWHC, Denis Ricard, inaugurated the meeting on 19 November in Córdoba; the conference took place over two days in the beautiful heritage setting of Sala Orive.

The Secretary General highlighted the commitment and energy exhibited by this regional secretariat, which has been coordinated by Córdoba since 2001: out of all the OWHC’s regional secretariats it is the one that accounts for the greatest number of World Heritage Cities, and half of the OWHC’s Board of Directors, four out of eight members, are drawn from this regional secretariat, something that underscores the important role played by the regional secretariat in the organization.

For her part the mayor declared that "heritage should cease to be a passive subject" as the recipient of subsidies, in order to position itself "in that area of opportunities where, with a much more proactive attitude, prosperity, employment and economic activity may be generated".

On Tuesday 20 November proceedings got under way with the welcoming of the cities of Split (Croatia) and Portugalete (Biscay, Spain). The latter joins the OWHC and our regional secretariat after the reform of the OWHC’s statutes in 2015, as a consequence of which not only cities whose historic or old towns were included on the UNESCO World Heritage List were eligible to join but also those cities that had a monument or UNESCO site as part of their urban fabric, a development that opened the door to numerous cities that had hitherto been unable to join the organization. With these two new additions the regional secretariat now has 31 member cities, plus the Vatican as an observer, making it the largest of the eight regional secretariats that make up the OWHC.

Categorized by country the 31 cities are: Armenia (Ejmiatsin), Austria (Vienna), Belgium (Brussels), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar), Cape Verde (Cidade Velha), Croatia (Dubrovnik, Split), France (Bordeaux, Lyon, Provins, Strasbourg), Greece (Rhodes), Montenegro (Kotor), Portugal (Angra do Heroísmo, Elvas, Évora, Guimarães, Oporto, Sintra) and Spain (Aranjuez, Baeza, Córdoba, Cuenca, Granada, Ibiza, Oviedo, Portugalete, Santiago de Compostela, Segovia, Tarragona, Úbeda).

Over the course of the conference the Regional Coordinator, Rafael Pérez de la Concha Camacho, presented his management report for the last two years as well as an action plan to be implemented in 2019 and its corresponding budget, totalling €57.603.89. For his part the OWHC Secretary General set out the Organization's activities and projects as well as the 15th OWHC World Congress, to be held in Krakow (Poland) from 2-5 June 2019 with the theme of "Heritage and Tourism: Local communities and visitors – sharing responsibilities", where the General Assembly is due to renew the OWHC Board of Directors and elect the host city of the next World Congress, scheduled for 2021.

The coordinators of the Regional Secretariat's various projects presented the forthcoming initiatives to be undertaken.

On behalf of the city of Granada, the coordinator of the "Local Craftsmanship and Visual Contamination" project, Pedro López López, heritage official at the Agencia Albaicín, presented the new website on craftsmanship (www.ciudadespatrimonio.eu). The Director of Tourism at Granada Town Hall, Gracia Peregrín, introduced the 1st Craft Market and 1st World Heritage Cities Artisans' Encounter, which will take place in Granada on 21, 22 and 23 December 2018, a market and encounter that will be repeated on an annual basis, hosted by different member cities of this regional secretariat.

Aranjuez coordinates the Youth and Heritage Project and the director of the Aranjuez Paisaje Cultural Foundation, María del Pozo, introduced the 2nd Young Ambassadors' Encounter, which will be held in Ibiza in March 2019 with the theme of Heritage and Tourism, as well as the 2nd Artistic Expression Competition, the winning entry from which will be used for the official OWHC Day of Solidarity poster in our Regional Secretariat's cities; this will be celebrated, as every year, on 8 September 2019 with the same theme as the World Congress: Heritage and Tourism.

Lastly on behalf of Córdoba, as the city that coordinates the Mobility and Heritage Project, Antonio Valdenebro and Rosa Lara, officers at Córdoba Town Hall's town planning department, introduced their proposal to publish, after numerous years of analysis and research, a document that compiles a series of campaigns, policies and instances of best practice in the area of mobility in the various cities.

Over the course of the afternoon the representatives of the cities in attendance set out the heritage management work, experiences and cases of best practice in their respective cities.

It was also agreed to hold the next Projects Meeting in Segovia (Spain) in the second half of 2019, and the 20th Regional Conference in Elvas (Portugal) in 2020.

The 18th Regional Conference drew to a close with a unanimous vote of confidence in support of the city of Córdoba as the ongoing host city of the Regional Secretariat of Southern Europe and the Mediterranean.

The "Economics of Heritage" training workshop ran on the morning of Wednesday 21 November, and was streamed live on YouTube, where it can still be viewed by clicking on the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=216oxbXhrvg&feature=youtu.be>.

The first speaker was XAVIER GEFFRE, Professor of Economics at the University of Paris I-Sorbonne, who emphasised the importance of analysing the economic data of tourist and heritage activities, which in turn necessitates having more indicators and impact studies. He set out the way the value of heritage has evolved over time, and how it has gone from being a value of simple existence, to a value of usage and finally a value of investment. He produced various statistics revealing the impact of heritage in generating employment in a range of European heritage cities and analysed the principle problems that accompany it. Lastly, he underlined the importance of Intangible Culture (“the street where I live” taking precedence over monuments) and the need for coexistence between the synergy and competitiveness of the creative class in what he called the Cultural District, which needs to be made up of companies engaged in various economic activities and sectors, not just one, for it to be an authentic motor of development.

The contribution made by ALEJANDRO RAMILO, expert in European programmes from the European Commission in Brussels, gave a snapshot of the existence and operation of the various EU cooperation programmes run by the European Commission; he urged this Secretariat to take advantage of these opportunities, given that one of the main problems that they find with these projects is the lack of cooperation between the participating cities, a problem that represents a great opportunity for this network.

After this presentation there was a brief contribution from Jesús Diz, an official at the Córdoba waste management corporation SADECO, who spoke about his experience as the coordinator of the European INTHERWASTE programme, as an example of best practice in the collection of urban waste in historic settings.

The final speaker at the workshop was the expert consultant NORMA BARBACCI, who has considerable experience in the field of heritage sponsorship and was Director of Programmes at the World Monuments Fund in New York for 17 years. She presented highly valuable information with the contact details of numerous entities and foundations in the world that are dedicated to philanthropy and cultural sponsorship, to which our organisation can submit joint and individual projects. She explained the tax incentives for such sponsorship in various countries, and the fact that in some countries part of the revenue raised from lotteries is earmarked for heritage projects. In her closing remarks she suggested that philanthropy should be treated as an investment and ought to be included in development plans at the national, regional and local levels.



OVPM . OWHC . OCPM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE OWHC:

The Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) is an international non-governmental organization founded on 8 September 1993 in Fez, Morocco and describes itself as representing a collective intelligence on all issues related to the urban management of World Heritage property. The OWHC comprises more than 300 cities with a site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

THE MAIN GOALS OF THE ORGANIZATION ARE:

- To favour the implementation of the World Heritage Convention
- To encourage cooperation between its members
- To enable the exchange of information and expertise on matters of conservation and management of urban heritage
- To develop a sense of solidarity among its member cities

Its organizational structure is headed by the General Assembly of all the cities, which meets every two years at a World Congress; the 15th World Congress will be held in Krakow, 2- 6 June 2019.

The General Assembly elects a Board of Directors comprising eight cities.

There are eight Regional Secretariats:

- Africa and the Middle East, based in Tunis, Tunisia
- Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico, based in Morelia, Mexico
- South America, based in Rímac, Peru
- Asia-Pacific, based in Gyeongju, South Korea
- Euro-Asia, based in Kazan, Russian Federation
- Central and Eastern Europe, based in Budapest, Hungary
- Northwest Europe and North America, based in Regensburg, Germany
- Southern Europe and the Mediterranean, based in Córdoba, Spain

It is worth noting that Córdoba has hosted the Regional Secretariat for Southern Europe and the Mediterranean since 2001 and its Regional Coordinator since then has been the Head of the Tourism and World Heritage Unit at Córdoba Town Hall, Rafael Pérez de la Concha Camacho, a record of continuous service that applies only to this Regional Secretariat.