

30/07/2014

Siena Charter proposed by ICOM Italy at its international conference, “Museums and Cultural Landscapes”

On 7 July, more than 250 museum professionals from Italy, Europe and Japan, as well as a number of Italian and international cultural organisations, met in Siena, Italy for discussions on “Museums and Cultural Landscapes”, the theme of the 2016 ICOM General Conference. At the conference’s close, the participants proposed the Siena Charter, a document presenting the Italian perspective on the responsibilities of museums towards heritage and its surrounding landscapes.



The Siena Conference was the starting point of discussions within ICOM's worldwide network on the 2016 theme. ICOM Italy's aim is that an [ICOM Declaration on Museums and Cultural Landscapes](#) be approved in Milan, so that new strategic objectives and programmes may be set for contemporary museums.

The Conference's participants discussed the Siena Charter, the document presenting the Italian view on the responsibilities of museums towards heritage and its surrounding landscapes. ICOM Italy is hoping that in 2015, the annual meetings of ICOM National Committees, International Committees, Affiliated Organisations and Regional Alliances will dedicate part of their agenda to the theme of “Museums and Cultural Landscapes”, comparing visions, experiences and legal contexts and proposing new ideas and approaches. By 2016, at least four different topics will come under discussion.

Firstly, the perception of landscape differs from one country to another and is connected with different cultural backgrounds. In some languages, the term landscape does not even exist. ICOM respects cultural diversity and promotes a comprehensive understanding of landscape. Landscape is a multifaceted concept which adds anthropological, social, economic and cultural dimensions to its physical, natural and geographic significance. Landscapes are part of the cultural and natural heritage to be preserved, interpreted and looked after, in their tangible and intangible aspects.

Secondly, ICOM would like to highlight the new social and territorial functions of museums. How can museums take responsibility for cultural and environmental heritage and support its preservation, as well as knowledge and communication about it? How can museums become centres of interpretation for the places and communities to which they belong? How can museums disseminate knowledge pertaining to heritage? Museums should be active in the preservation not only of their collections, but of the tangible and intangible, cultural and natural heritage that surrounds them. The skills and resources necessary to do so should be analysed.

Thirdly, addressing the relationships between museums and cultural landscapes offers the opportunity to form new partnerships and networks, and to develop interdisciplinary new approaches. How can we promote effective cooperation between museums, professionals, organisations and institutions?

Fourthly, how can museums help planners and politicians promote sustainable development and preserve landscapes while improving tourism without endangering cultural and natural heritage?

ICOM's aim is that a "[Declaration of ICOM on Museums and Cultural Landscapes](#)" be approved at the [24th General Conference in Milan](#), so that new strategic objectives and programmes may be set for contemporary museums. ICOM plans to identify one hundred innovative museum actions from different countries and cultures, presenting these at the Milan Conference as international best practices.