Integrated conservation of architectural heritage, focused on sustainable territorial development

(resume)

The analysis developed under activity 1 under project “ARCHILANDIA SKILLS – SUPPORTING THE FUTURE THROUGH RESTORATION OF THE PAST”, contract number BG051PO001-7.0.07-0013-C0001, implemented with the financial support of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2007-2013, co-financed by the European Social Fund of the European Union, consists of information on the approach for integrated conservation of architectural heritage and adding cultural value to the buildings for the purpose of achieving sustainable territorial development. The analysis is structured around the following thematic sections:

- Necessity for conservation of architectural cultural heritage, focused on sustainable territorial development;
- Characteristics of the approach of integrated conservation of architectural cultural heritage;
- The approach of integrated conservation in European context;
- Restoration and maintenance of local historic centers – history and legal framework in Italy and characteristics of the Archilandia approach as it was put in practice in Marmilla, Sardinia;
- Benefits for the local authorities from putting the approach of integrated conservation in practice;

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Benefits for the local communities from putting the approach of integrated conservation in practice;

Role of the traditional crafts in the approach for sustainable integrated conservation;

Conservation of cultural heritage in Bulgaria.

The necessity for conservation of cultural-historic heritage was considered first. The understanding of the gravity of deterioration, neglect, ruination and decline of the old city centers and the smaller settlements, which occurred, as well as the follow up speculative actions, which had an additional destructive effect towards them, puts into crisis the growth model, which is based on technical and economic progress, characteristic for the entire modern industrial period. This understanding and awareness directed the most sensitive and prepared part of the post-industrial cultural towards rediscovery and valorization of local traditions and knowledge by requiring the preservation and restoration of those contexts, which still preserve their identity and characteristics; and as far as architecture is concerned: the historic layers, the smaller settlements, the traditional construction types, the traditional used materials and local technologies. Today almost everyone shares the obligation to undertake a behavior, which leads to lowering the use of nonrenewable energy sources, in order to apply production practices, which encourage as broad use of renewable energy sources as possible. Still it is well known that the construction sector is the sector, which is most dependent on energy (almost 50% of the overall energy consumption) and its adaptation would contribute to a great extent for saving resources and limiting the pollution of the planet. The environment, which was built in the past, automatically possesses the distinctive features, which are characteristic for sustainability. This sustainability is guaranteed by the spontaneity and irrationality, which are related to the historic conditions as well as the conditions of the environment in the time of its formation. In other words we speak of sustainability in time, which mostly needs repeated adaptation and systematization in concert with the characteristics of modern life – restructuring, which can be achieved only through restoration, which is conducted in a technically correct manner with the use of analytical methodology. Today’s culture of quality should be associated with a greater protection and more conscious valorization of traditional architectural heritage, in which the conditions of compatibility with the environment can be strengthened additionally, adequately and constantly.

Section 2 of the analysis considers the nature of the approach for integrated conservation, applied for protection of architectural cultural heritage. The term “integrated conservation”, initially
approved in resolutions from the 60s, related to the necessity for creating a relation between the protection of heritage and development of the territories, was one of the most important steps in the development of the European policy in the field of architectural heritage. This idea was further supported within the European Charter on architectural heritage, by the Amsterdam declaration, a consequence from the Congress on European architectural heritage, as well as by Resolution 76 (28) of Ministerial committee. The integrated conservation of immovable cultural heritage of a certain country firstly concerns its citizens. Integrated conservation is an approach, which maintain the balance between man and his traditional environment and contributes to the preservation of values inherited from the past, which the qualities of the environment are based on to a considerable extent.

Further on the analysis considers the development of the approach for integrated conservation in the European context. There is traced the development of those policies, strategies and legal instruments at European level, which aim at giving the countries the framework, within which they should work for the purpose of preserving their architectural cultural heritage and achieving sustainable territorial development. Until today Europe has been equipped with a number of recommendations, resolutions and guidelines, related to conservation and development of ancient monuments and historical and artistic sites. This multitude of recommendations, addressed towards the governments, were mainly related to the necessity of setting up inventories for protection and prevention measures against the damaging or destruction of this heritage. Some of these measures are related to:

- Inclusion of architectural heritage in one common policy for urbanism and territorial development;
- Allocating resources for conservation and restoration works;
- Tax and administrative relief, which can encourage the owners or private users to undertake restoration and revival works themselves;
- And in the last place, different measures for training and invigorating public interest.

An important place in the analysis is given to the detailed study of the practice for restoration and maintenance of local historic centers and the characteristics of the Archilandia approach, as it was applied in the region of Marmilla, Sardinia. What was studied here was the legal framework and the
activities implemented by Local action group “Marmille, Sarcidano, Archi, Grighine”, which set into motion the process for restoration of the territory through adding cultural value to old, neglected, destroyed buildings. The repeated use in architecture represents a historically spread practice and is focused on those buildings, which still possess readiness, subject of eventual alteration processes, for adaptation to new functions. As a whole, the concept for repeated use is connected to long term interpretation of architecture. Actually, it is quite logical periods of changes to take place in the lives of the buildings (ordinary maintenance, extensions or partial destructions, changes of purpose, changes of functionality and others), which reflect changes in society and its needs. These changes contribute for specifying the historic route of the buildings, but can also be considered as those “critical moments”, the passing through which demonstrates the resilience of a certain building, which is put under stress by testing its ability to adapt and its longevity. The combination “restoration – repeated use” surfaces in the form of a cultural model. The key place, which culture holds today in the processes of development of most postindustrial economies is undoubted. What is still not sufficiently broadly comprehended however, at least as far as Bulgaria and Italy are concerned, is that culture can play the role of a main engine for economic development. In fact, the discussions, connected to culture, keep gravitating around the specific elements, which should be used for “defining” the artistic and architectural heritage. It is important for culture to be considered in a broader sense, for the real importance of tangible culture heritage, which creates advantages in comparison with all other countries and which still remains unused to a great extent, to be comprehended.

The plan for local development of inter-provincial LAG Marmille, Sarcidano, Archi and Grighine in the scope of the community initiative LEADER+ created the instrument for this. It envisaged the implementation of an operational instrument for “research and analysis of the constructed fund” in the old settlements of 44 municipalities from the LEADER+ zone, focused on the development of Guidelines for improving the quality of the old town centers and the territorial development elements. The considerable amount of studied documentation allowed the discovery and research of about 30 different types of buildings, characteristic for the system of the settlements in the referential territory with common analogies, which refer to the entire zone and with characteristics, which can be assigned more specifically to certain settlements both concerning the town structure, as well as the precise types of historic buildings.
The analysis of the existing historical traditional architectural heritage, necessary for the discovery of the deterioration problems and the methodology of restoration works, showed the town forms, the types of buildings, the constructive specifics and materials, by offering a basis for complete protection and valorization of the smaller historic centers in the LAG zone.

The availability, appreciation and use of the guidelines for restoration are necessary, but still insufficient stages for guaranteeing that the processes for maintenance, conservation support and repeated use of traditional housing architecture will be compatible with and will follow the typological and constructive characteristics of the specific building. In other words, we should overcome a fundamental critical level, which consists in passing from “the theory to the practice of restoration”. This transition can be overcome only by means of appropriate “consciousness and knowledge” on behalf of the interested parties, who to the greatest extent define the results from the restoration and repeated use of the buildings practice: architects, technical experts, construction surveillance and executors. In this connection the application of approaches similar to the envisaged in article 19 from District law 29/98 in Sardinia possibility for municipalities to establish „workshops for restoration of the historic center”, could fill up the procedural gap within the process of overcoming the blockage in the transfer from the theory to the practice of restoration. The restoration workshop should support architects and construction surveillance in the technical elaboration and the execution of the restoration works; should support the technicians by means of formulating implementation directives, contributing to the enforced territorial development instrument and should attract them in the control of the construction works through constant monitoring of the processes for repeated use and preservation of historical traditional architectural heritage; it should provide guidance to the brigades through organization of training courses, rediscovery of techniques and use of materials, which are compatible with the pre-modern building; in essence, it should give life to a specialized community for adoption of knowledge and skills. The guidelines and the training programs developed on its grounds could represent a valuable instrument for support in this direction.

Sections 5 and 6 in the analysis study the benefits from the application of the approach for integrated conservation and the adding of cultural value to the buildings for the local authorities and for the local population. These benefits are considered from an economical, social and cultural aspect. Examples are provided for managerial actions on behalf of the municipalities, which are
interested to protect their historical architectural resources (identification, inventory, development of a management plan).

The analysis pays special attention to the role of traditional crafts in the approach of sustainable integrated conservation. The approach for sustainable integrated conservation defends the thesis that traditional construction technologies, planning and techniques for protection of historic buildings, landscapes and communities should form the future construction practices, should present basic models for future training, scientific research and development, as well as guarantee a more resilient built environment. Crafts are a considerable part of the processes of formation and encouragement of the development of local culture, as well as of the activities for increase of the awareness of people on their history, traditions, knowledge; an instrument, which has been used for centuries. The development of artistic crafts and traditions makes possible the improvement of local cultural life and the protection of historical places to take place easier, with achievement of more sustainable results in the long run.

The last section in the analysis considers the problems of cultural heritage conservation in Bulgaria. The development of architecture and legislation in the sphere of protection of architectural resources is historically traced; the same goes for the problems, which the country was and still is facing; the difficulties for municipalities in combining the processes for protection of architectural cultural and historic heritage with the processes of territorial development.

The analysis also presents a list of architectural sites – the most famous ones, most of them already restored and maintained – within the targeted territories under the project, which are just a small part of the huge local resource, which could be subject of intervention, through the implementation of the approach for integrated conservation.