Integrated Documentation Protocols Enabling Decision Making in Cultural Heritage Protection

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Abstract. Integrated documentation of cultural heritage is a necessary process that precedes any other task or procedure regarding sustainable conservation and management. In order for any new methodology for monument documentation to be effective and widely applicable, not only it needs to be harmonized with existing standards but also, most importantly, be able to cover the variety and the particularity of cultural heritage, applying the best possible organization and management of knowledge. This is achieved by selecting and integrating common criteria that formulate a dynamic archive, collecting and organizing all information on the monument, during its entire life-time and by upgrading the current documentation methodologies. The proposed integrated documentation protocols support the development of sustainable maintenance and preservation through knowledge management by incorporating and supplying with all necessary data regarding decision making on determining priorities of Cultural Heritage protection.

Keywords: cultural heritage, data registration, monument documentation, protocols, decision making support.

1 Introduction

In the past, decisions regarding conservation interventions and protection of monuments were largely based on prior experience, limited and non-systematic documentation and available technology and often they were not even supported by standardized diagnostic studies. Application of incompatible conservation interventions and/or the use of incompatible materials has caused significant defects and enhanced the decay in historic buildings/monuments. This approach has been shown to have limited the effectiveness of any interventions implemented on the historic structures and in many cases even threatened their preservation state.

Monuments preservation depends highly on compilation, exploitation and management of data relating to a monuments entire life time. This process is often proven to be difficult and complicated to achieve due to the great variety of existing available information, regarding both the building and the possible solutions of conservation materials and interventions, taking into consideration other parameters.
as well (economic, social etc), affecting the decision making and depending on different weight factors each time.

It was made obvious that there exists no established universal documentation methodology for cultural heritage assets, but instead great variations in the systems of collecting and organizing data from buildings in the European countries. The responsibility for data management depends on the administrative structure in each country.

Aim of the proposed study is to develop criteria and a methodology for the creation of specific protocols for integrated documentation, including indicative parameters for data documentation, implementing National, European and International experiences and recommendations. The intention is to evaluate successful and promising methodologies and tools for data management and to develop a common pan-European methodology embracing existing European standards. This work has been based on previous work and experience in the field by the National Technical University of Athens, School of Chemical Engineering, where recommendations for monuments’ documentation are developed¹ [1], [2].

2 Methodological Approach

The proposed integrated protocols are developed in three stages:

During the first stage of this work a survey was conducted upon the existing documentation protocols in the sector of cultural heritage protection in European and neighboring countries. The aim was to assess the current state-of-the-art in this field, evaluating the existing documentation methodologies employed and learning from them, in order to achieve a more integrated and general approach.

The second stage of this report focuses on the development of integrated documentation protocols, which will provide with effective standardized data collection, advancing the data level in comparison to the current documentation methodologies, providing with criteria and indicators for risk assessment responding to advanced diagnostics and data management.

The final step of this work shows how integrated documentation protocols can serve as a tool of strategic planning in decision making for monuments protection.

2.1 State of the Art

Existing documentation protocols in the sector of cultural heritage protection in European and neighboring countries were investigated and analyzed in order to assess the current state-of-the-art in this field.

Twenty-three information systems regarding documentation and risk assessment methodologies for cultural heritage from eleven European countries were studied and

¹ Based on previous work developed by National Technical University of Athens and taking into consideration Deliverables of WP2 and WP3 of EU-CHIC Project: http://eu-chic.eu/