

RISK MANAGEMENT FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES IN ITALY: THE CASE OF THE UNESCO SITE PORTOVENERE, CINQUE TERRE AND THE ISLANDS (PALMARIA, TINO AND TINETTO)

Paola MUSSINI

Vice President, CHIEF onlus (Cultural Heritage International Emergency Force), Turin, Italy
PhD researcher at Politecnico di Torino, DIGEP (Department of Engineering Management and Production), Turin, Italy

paola.mussini@chief-onlus.it, paola.mussini@polito.it

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ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage is by its very nature in a condition of potential degradation, due to occasional catastrophic events and to cyclic and continuous phenomena that may generate destructive impacts in time. To fully achieve the protection of cultural heritage, it is therefore important to identify the aggressive agents whose action threaten its preservation, in order to contain, reduce and, if possible, eliminate their effects.

Although the interest in disaster preparedness is renewed after the occurrence of any catastrophe, so far very little has been established on a formal level for the cultural heritage, which is rarely mentioned in local emergency plans and still has no actual intervention strategy, recognized and shared internationally. Despite the lack of clear guidelines, several recent studies have tackled the subject, proposing the use of innovative tools for the detection and analysis of risks and impacts on cultural heritage.

Italy is often described as a Country of culture, history and art. Its immense cultural heritage, material and immaterial, natural and man made, is a precious asset that should guide our own development in a sustainable manner, respectful of its own characteristics and qualities.

We brag about having the highest number of sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (we have just recently reached 50 properties), never really and systematically taking into account that, along with the privileges of owning, sharing and benefit from such beauties, we bear the moral duty to conserve it, protect it and manage it. In fact only about half of the Italian UNESCO sites have a management system in place, even though it is a mandatory document in the UNESCO framework and national law (law 77/2006), entitled "Special measures for preservation and fruition of the Italian sites of cultural, natural and landscape importance, inscribed on the 'World Heritage list', under the protection of the UNESCO", expressly mentions the management plan as a typical element of World Heritage sites and gives priority of funding to the UNESCO heritage sites, which aim at managing their cultural services and tourism flows (Badia, 2011).

This paper aims at proposing risk assessment an effective as a proactive form of preventive conservation and presents the final results of the application of UNESCO Disaster Risk Management methodology to an Italian cultural landscape (Cinque Terre). This document was drafted during the 8th International Training Course on Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage 2013 held at Rits-DMUCH (Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan) and supported by UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS – ICORP.

INTRODUCTION

Italy is worldly known for being a land of natural and cultural beauty, full of prestigious cultural sites and centuries old traditions, visited by millions of tourists every year. This uniqueness has been also recognized by UNESCO, which has accepted in its World Heritage List 50 Italian sites since 1978; Italy is now the first State Member for numbers of sites inscribed.