



**CHARTER FOR
MEGA—EVENTS
IN HERITAGE—RICH
CITIES** HOMEE

ABOUT THE CHARTER

The Charter consists of 13 key principles which represent the Charter's core values. The "Snapshots" section provides concrete examples of each of the 13 principles, presenting the cases in which they were observed.

The Charter for mega-events in heritage-rich cities provides principles and recommendations that can help cities take advantage of the opportunities offered by mega-events and mitigate their risks. The Charter explores issues ranging from the new uses and physical stresses that mega-events can introduce in historic areas to changes in the understanding of heritage spaces. It explores the challenges for the local governance of mega-events.

Local policymakers can refer to the Charter's recommendations from the initial bidding stages for cultural mega-events like Capital/City of Culture programmes and throughout the planning of the event and its legacy. More broadly, the Charter can be useful for organising other large cultural events, festivals, and sport mega-events that interact with cities' tangible and intangible heritage.

The Charter consists of 13 key principles structured within the four themes: **CONTEXT MATTERS, PLANNING LEGACIES, INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE, COMMUNITIES AND IDENTITIES**. The 13 principles represent the Charter's core values. They are supported by more detailed guidelines and recommendations aimed at policymakers, as well as event organisers, heritage officials and the local community. The **KEY CONCEPTS** section offers readers short definitions of the Charter's essential terms.

The accompanying **SNAPSHOTS** section provides concrete examples of each of the 13 principles, presenting the cases in which they were observed. These snapshot views of successful cases and more critical aspects can support policymakers and event organisers with best practices, key issues and missed opportunities from which to learn.

The Charter's contents should remain relevant for as long as heritage-rich cities continue to organise mega-events, despite the various disruptions that may arise. The Charter refers to social distancing and digital strategies that can contribute to post-COVID-19 event planning without compromising the potential benefits for cultural heritage and the local community.

ABOUT THE HOMEE RESEARCH PROJECT

The Charter is based on the "HOMEE – Heritage Opportunities/threats with Mega-Events in Europe" research project and the valuation by dozens experts, practitioners and decision makers.

The Charter is based on a multi-year study of cultural mega-events across Europe. The study incorporated the professional input of a diverse range of researchers, experts and stakeholders. The research project "HOMEE – Heritage Opportunities/threats with Mega-Events in Europe" was funded under the European call "JPICH Heritage in Changing Environments". The HOMEE project brought together an international multi-disciplinary group of researchers from the Politecnico di Milano, University of Hull, Neapolis University Pafos and International Cultural Centre working in the urban planning, cultural heritage preservation and mega-event planning fields.

The Charter for mega-events in heritage-rich cities derives from the findings of the research project that conducted five in-depth retrospective case studies and a study of one cultural mega-event as it unfolded. Policymakers, local administrators and event organisers recognised these academic findings and the Charter as potentially useful for multiple actors in bidding, planning and hosting mega-events in sensitive historic contexts. The range of institutions that have expressed interest in and endorsed the Charter demonstrates the widespread approval of its ideas and concepts. The Charter will support city policymakers seeking to protect their heritage while utilising mega-events to promote long-term development.

This Charter would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of:

Davide Ponzini, Zachary Mark Jones, Stefano Di Vita, Stefano D'Armento, Alessandro Scandiffio, Franco Bianchini, Enrico Tommarchi, David Atkinson, Julia Georgi-Nerantzia Tzortzi, Evanthia Dova, Angeliki Sivitanidou, Natia Anastasi, Jacek Purchla, Joanna Sanetra-Szeliga, Piotr Knaś, Anna Koziół and Adam Dąbrowski.

ENDORSEMENTS

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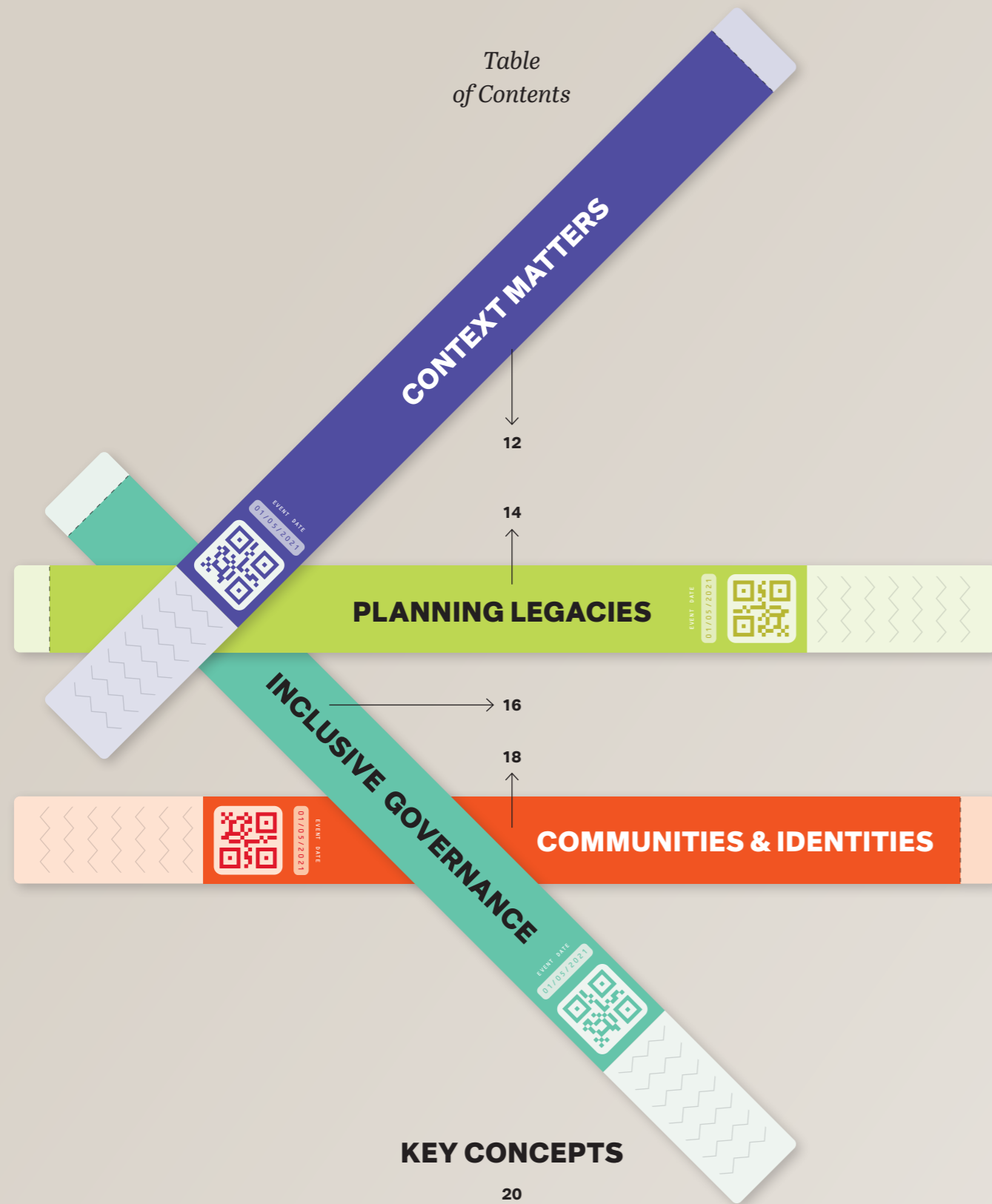
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SNAPSHOTS


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CONTEXT MATTERS


Consider thoroughly if and how to bid based on the characteristics of the urban context.


Right-size the contents of the mega-event to contribute to sustainable development.



Mobilise mega-events to streamline political visions and consensus.


Re-use and adapt existing facilities when possible or design context-sensitive interventions.


INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE


Support integrated planning approaches that bring together cultural, heritage and other policies.



Involve cultural heritage experts in the bidding, planning and legacy phases.



Engage local communities but avoid overpromising or minimising their decision-making power.

COMMUNITIES & IDENTITIES


Align mega-event planning with spatial visions and long-term strategies.


Plan for the mega-event legacy from the inception/bidding stage.


Spread out mega-event locations to avoid the overuse and overcrowding of iconic sites.


Explore lost, dissonant and new heritage narratives through cultural mega-events.


Anticipate the challenges inherent in a mega-event's intensified use of cultural heritage.


Address heritage criticalities and mitigate social and political conflict.

PLANNING LEGACIES

CONTEXT MATTERS

EVENT DATE
01/05/2021



(Context matters)



Decision-makers in heritage-rich cities shall consider thoroughly if and how to bid based on their city's specific conditions, potentials, size, socio-economic dynamics, infrastructure, accessibility and cultural heritage.

International agencies, along with national and local actors, should consider heritage-related opportunities, existing challenges and future projects as drivers of mega-event bidding and planning.

City actors and stakeholders should collectively and openly reflect upon what type of cultural or sport mega-event to target/bid for. They should prioritise the event that can best align with local context and aspirations.

An inclusive approach encompassing multiple heritage narratives can provide greater opportunities for mega-event planning to address diverse economic, social, cultural and environmental goals.

A mega-event can serve as an occasion to re-think the role of marginal areas and landscapes in urban, peri-urban and rural areas and establish new networks of places, people and practices.

The core strategies of the bid and subsequent plans can include underused historic areas or places not yet considered heritage but which are worthy of recognition and protection. Such sites can contribute to improving cultural life and spreading economic opportunities.



Mega-events and their contents should be right-sized in order to contribute to long-term heritage policies and place-based development.

City and regional actors shall effectively communicate the tangible and intangible heritage values and the expected impacts of including it in mega-event planning. They should articulate long-term benefits rather than concentrate only on short-term economic goals.

The promotion of digital participation in events can expand the audience and co-create culture. Still, organisers must be careful not to disconnect digital events from the meaning and authenticity of heritage spaces.



Mega-events can help streamline political visions and generate consensus while providing much-needed funding to improve cultural heritage.

Mega-events typically build momentum for investment. They can help leverage public funding and direct additional private support towards relevant heritage policy actors and agencies.

Using a mega-event to strengthen cultural and tourism activities requires policies that anticipate and mitigate the adverse effects of potential over-tourism, gentrification or drops in tourism. Mega-event planning should seek a balance of diversified economic activities.

Including local tangible and intangible heritage in cultural mega-events strengthens city image, perception and appreciation of its cultures on a broader scale.

A strong cultural policy vision along with dedicated digital tools can help citizens and visitors better understand and appreciate local cultural heritage. This can broaden heritage awareness and increase the engagement of local actors.



Re-using and adapting existing infrastructure and facilities or designing context-sensitive interventions can benefit from meaningful uses of places that have proved to be resilient over time.

City decision-makers and event organizers should survey existing infrastructure and facilities, temporary structures, and cultural places to be potentially utilized, understanding their heritage value, local and regional roles and connections.

Planning officials should envision interventions related to the mega-event within the evolution of the urban and regional landscape so as to reduce the potential frictions with heritage interests and powers.

Decision makers should acknowledge, at a variety of scales, outdoor historic sites, open-air public spaces, parks and landscapes that can host a range of events and activities while also reinvigorating their uses by local communities.

PLANNING LEGACIES



Since mega-events accelerate and amplify urban development processes, cities should align their planning with spatial visions and long-term strategies to make the most of the potential benefits that can extend beyond the time frame of the events themselves.

Mega-event interventions should be part of a more comprehensive spatial vision and long-term strategic planning to avoid negatively impacting heritage areas through oversized facilities, infrastructure and problematic political, spatial and socio-economic trends.

The host city should envision mega-event planning through multi- or trans-scalar approaches that enhance tangible and intangible relationships with the broader region by mobilising the supra-local networks typical of mega-events.

All plans should consider short- and long-term environmental and landscape impacts, with the goals of sustainability and reduction of adverse effects on the historic urban landscape and natural heritage.



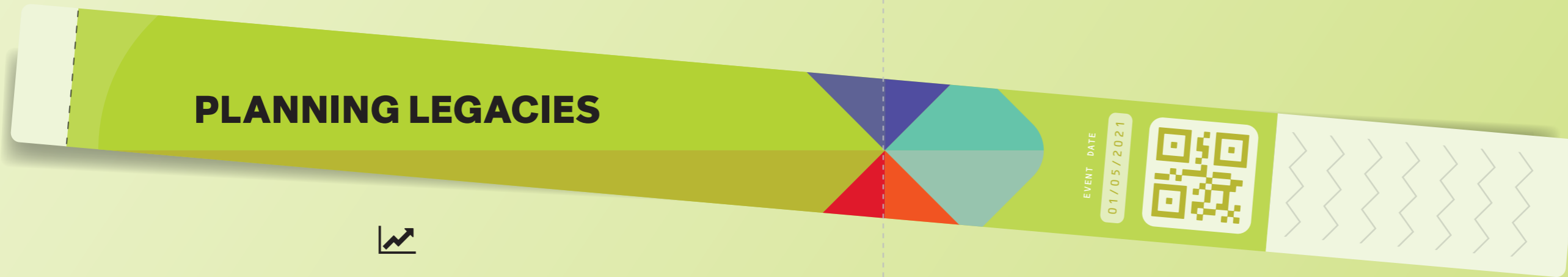
Mega-event planning should be legacy-oriented starting from the inception/bidding stage, embracing shared and reflective approaches to culture, heritage, and city identity.

Mega-event planning processes should consider long-term legacies not only in terms of the 'hardware' (physical space and infrastructure) but also 'software' (cultural program and practices), seeking to sustain activities and their impacts even after the mega-event is over.

Policymakers and event organisers should not instrumentalise the stringent deadlines of the mega-event to override land-use regulation or bypass heritage decision-makers, especially regarding historic areas and assets.

Mega-event planners and heritage policymakers should foster agreements and partnerships to build political consensus and synergies that can bypass gridlock, accelerate decision-making and deliver projects on time.

Organisers should earmark part of a cultural mega-event budget and put in place appropriate policy tools to ensure conservation planning and practice over time.



(Planning legacies)



Locating mega-event sites throughout a city can help avoid overcrowding and counterpoint the overuse of a few iconic locations and their "festivalisation".

Distributing events throughout urban space can encourage broader citizen participation, instil a sense of pride in local heritage sites and disseminate new opportunities. This can help avoid reproducing or generating new inequalities between city centres and peripheries.

Larger sports or other events should synergise with smaller simultaneous cultural events (e.g. Cultural Olympiad) to extend their life over time and across space, avoiding immediate post-event decline.

Expanding the time-frame of the mega-event and improving accessibility to less popular cultural venues can help prevent the commodification of heritage and the Disneyfication of a few iconic sites, protecting their authenticity and allowing social distancing, if and when required.

The use of digital technologies and platforms should encourage hybrid physical/online events in heritage spaces to attract new audiences and ensure social distancing, if needed, without obstructing cultural participation and heritage appreciation.

Open spaces, parks and rural areas can provide greater flexibility in event planning, reducing inherent uncertainty. Such spaces can better adapt to different sized audiences.

INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE



Cultural mega-events can support integrated policy approaches that bring cultural programs, intangible and tangible heritage, development and other city policies together in one widely shared vision.

A unified vision for a mega-event that matches heritage issues with other policy goals within a longer-term development process will broaden support for mega-event related interventions.

Decision-makers should recognise the value and potential contributions of intangible heritage, incorporating it into event planning and local policy.

Mega-event organisers and urban policymakers should envision how to plan and implement the event in a manner which strengthens local capacity building and public participation practices.

Plans should provide alternative development scenarios and digital options for a mega-event to respond to socio-economic and political crises, environmental and health emergencies and other disruptive eventualities.

Newly-created internal networks of various actors that facilitate the implementation of the mega-event in heritage-rich cities should not be disbanded afterwards but rather maintained to preserve the institutional capacity gained.



Cultural heritage experts should be involved in the bidding, planning and legacy phases of a mega-event to promote tangible and intangible heritage. They should assess whether the related goals are met.

Mega-event organisers and urban policymakers should recognise the knowledge and value that heritage institutions and actors, NGOs and grassroots organisations can bring to mega-event planning. They should seek their contributions at all stages.

The transition from bidding to planning a mega-event is a crucial moment for cooperation and inclusion of governing authorities and departments at different levels (including heritage policy actors). This can reduce possible conflict and ensure collaboration.



EVENT DATE
01/05/2021



(Inclusive governance)



Mega-events bring many different actors together to cooperate within new governance structures in order to respond to new challenges and rigid deadlines. Such networks can affect heritage decision-making processes during planning and beyond the event. Such structures should become long-term cooperative networks within legacy plans.

The evaluation of the mega-event should incorporate heritage goals. Organisers should assess the event's impacts on: heritage assets and their care, heritage awareness, appreciation and participation, skills and abilities of local heritage groups and organisations.



Mobilising local communities in participation processes before, during and after the event is crucial. Mega-event organisers should avoid either overpromising the power given to communities or minimising it.

Mega-event organisers should avoid uneven approaches that begin with a broad participatory approach that abruptly ends later. They should seek to modulate participation during and even after the mega-event.

Urban policymakers and mega-event organisers pursuing participatory processes shall involve all social groups, ages and ethnicities with the aim of preventing conflicts and harnessing multiple contributions, including heritage-related ones.

Mega-event organisers should map community needs and prepare to provide feedback throughout the process to limit conflict when bringing together actors with different operational styles, agendas and interests. This will help build consensus and transparency regarding the planning and implementation phases.

COMMUNITIES & IDENTITIES



Cultural mega-events can help explore lost, dissonant and new heritage narratives, strengthen community identities and diversify heritage appreciation.

Widely inclusive engagement practices can lead to understanding heritage beyond historic landmarks and long-established practices, celebrating larger environments and contexts, lesser-known traditions and long-silenced stories.

Exploring heritage through the arts and culture in innovative ways encourages local communities to engage with and appreciate cultural heritage.

Promoting heritage narratives in a mega-event should avoid stereotypes and oversimplifications generated solely for tourists. Such narratives should foster multiple interpretations of heritage for local and regional audiences by highlighting different cultures, traditions and communities.

Differentiating the profile of locals and tourists and diversifying their expected engagement/attendance can help mobilise different audiences and provide cultural opportunities that meet all user groups' interests.



Anticipating the problems and challenges inherent in the intensified use of cultural heritage is key to ensuring an event's success and the long-term care of heritage.

The preparation of studies and research on historical places and heritage is essential. Such studies can reduce the risk of a mega-event damaging the authenticity of built and intangible heritage and can facilitate the decision-making process.

Regular maintenance of the city's heritage should be prioritised. Works should be implemented not only for the mega-event itself or for tourist attractions but should support longer-term socio-economic well-being and cultural viability.

Cultural heritage policies and mega-event programs should include modern and contemporary sites that risk being overlooked, undervalued and consequently lost to future generations.

By using cultural and natural heritage in a sustainable manner, mega-events can engage with and educate local communities about its value and protection over time.



(Communities & identities)



Addressing heritage criticalities can enrich mega-event related plans and projects, helping mitigate social and political conflicts.

Enhancing cultural heritage infrastructure and accessibility can valorise sites and introduce new functions and uses for underused or neglected amenities and spaces that go beyond tourism. Such action should not threaten the sense of belonging of individual communities.

Local, national and international artists and cultural organisations can help foster change in public space, collective memory and local identities to create a more liveable city and stimulate pride of place by reframing local heritage and/or pushing the typical boundaries between culture and heritage practices.

Long-term strategies for heritage in a mega-event should include a risk management chapter that addresses: potential conflicting narrations, the politicisation of the cultural narratives/identities of cities and neighbourhoods, the exclusion of certain social groups, issues of authenticity.

Acknowledging the range of shared values regarding cultural heritage assets enables building diverse and inclusive heritage coalitions and projects that transcend established national identities and borders.

Broadening a mega-event's focus on local and regional populations can enhance involvement and volunteering, potentially reducing the stress on heritage sites while also sustaining endogenous demand for events in case of emergencies that limit international access and mobility.



The following terms intend to clarify the language used throughout the Charter and the “Snapshots section” rather than provide universal definitions. Complex concepts are grouped according to six thematic areas and synthesised for a wide readership. The definitions derive from an in-depth literature review by the HOME research project that can be found at the following link:

🔗 https://mck.krakow.pl/images/upload/HOME_lit_review_www.pdf

HERITAGE

Tangible heritage

Tangible cultural heritage refers to physical objects created, maintained and transmitted intergenerationally, considered by a society to be valuable and significant. Such heritage includes moveable objects as well as immovable built heritage or even underwater shipwrecks and ruins.

Intangible heritage

Intangible heritage is embodied in people rather than inanimate objects. It includes - but is not limited to - oral traditions, performing arts, folk traditions and traditional crafts skills, as well as knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe.

Historic urban landscape

The 2011 UNESCO Recommendation frames the historic city as subject to dynamic economic, social and cultural forces that continuously transform it. The Historic Urban Landscape refers to all elements that shape a city's image and its broader context; they include topography,

geomorphology, the historic and contemporary built environment, open spaces, land use patterns and urban structure. Equally important are socio-cultural practices and values, economic processes and the intangible dimensions of heritage.

Under-recognised heritage

Any tangible or intangible heritage element that may be of great importance or value for local communities, but which fall outside official policy such as legally recognised heritage listings

Heritage-rich city

One city – and in particular important organisations and groups within a city – that recognises the presence and value of different and outstanding forms of heritage and that actively develops policies to protect, improve and promote them.

Authenticity

Authenticity typically refers to the original state or the perceivable features of tangible heritage. It includes materials, design, configuration, crafts skills, etc. Authenticity may also refer to aligning cultural events and programs to local values, meanings, history and culture.

Dissonant heritage

Cultural heritage elements and features that can provoke rejection, disagreement, or exclusion from primary heritage narratives. Dissonant heritage may refer to representations of a painful past or recall past events that cannot be easily reconciled by a given society (or relevant groups) and its contemporary values. There could also be discordance between stories and values attributed to a given heritage object, site or memory by different groups and how the past is represented in public spheres.

MEGA-EVENT

Cultural mega-event

Capital/City of Culture programmes and other major events with a cultural focus carried out over a more extended period (usually up to one year), typically spread out across host cities and, tending to rely on a mix of existing spaces and venues, and newly built facilities.

Sport mega-event

Important sporting events/competitions with a short duration (several weeks) that require significant investment in infrastructure or venues and are often condensed in few locations rather than spread throughout a city.

Small cultural events

Events of varying size and duration taking place in the existing spaces and venues of cities.

URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Land use regulation

This central tool of modern urban planning in many countries consists of the definition of areas, zones or specific targets in the physical environment (e.g. historic complexes with given features) in which specific development or transformation activities are permissible or not. Land use regulations often define sanctions or other means of enforcement.

Spatial planning

Processes typically led by the public sector that take the form of plans and policies whose aim is to define or modify urban, regional and supra-regional arrangements in terms of the location, organisation of and connection among people, economic and social activities, environmental features etc. Consistent policies and measures in different sectors (e.g. infrastructure, housing, environmental protection) often support a spatial development vision.

Strategic planning

Processes involving multiple public, private and social parties that seek to define joint public intervention topics and strategies regarding the development of a city or region.

Place-based approach

A planning orientation geared towards the complex understanding and appreciation of local socio-economic and cultural features. Place-based planning recognises multiple and dynamic interdependencies between projects/actions and their contexts on various scales. In such an approach, local knowledge and social abilities typically feed into and benefit from the decision-making and development process over time.

TOURISM

Overtourism

The harmful/adverse impacts of excessive tourist concentration on a destination, and its physical, economic and socio-cultural features as well as on the quality of local life and the visitor experience.

Disneyfication

For urban studies, the application of a Disney theme park model to urban design and management. The deployment of such a model promotes values associated with entertainment, consumerism, spectacle, narrative and escapism. It implies transforming a complex context into a simplified, idealised, sanitised, carefully-controlled and easily-palatable setting.

Festivalisation

The exploitation of festivals and cultural events as strategic urban policy tools to generate urban renewal, city promotion and branding.

Sustainable tourism

An approach to tourism as a practice promoting an area's viable long-term development through a balance of tourist satisfaction, natural resource conservation, protection of local cultures and traditions and support of local communities and economies.

PARTICIPATION PRACTICES

Consensus-building

A mainly passive form of public participation involving the presentation of policies or programmes to the local population by policymakers or event promoters who negotiate the acceptance of these policies/programmes by the local population.

Volunteers

Members of the public who help deliver certain activities (e.g. cultural events) devoting their time and labour without being paid as a form of a community service.

Engagement

The act of taking part in cultural events and activities, including active involvement (e.g. co-creation of art projects).

Event attendance

The act of taking part in cultural events and activities as a spectator, without active participation in shaping cultural contents or programmes. Attendance should be distinguished from other participation practices.

ACTORS

Mega-event organisers

The organisation (e.g. public agency, committee, foundation) tasked with proposing and/or planning an event's contents throughout the bidding, planning and implementation phases.

Policymakers / decision-makers

Institutional and social organisations that make choices and/or implement relevant measures in given public policy fields (e.g. heritage preservation, infrastructure development, land-use regulation, urban regeneration).

Heritage policy actors

Public institutions, private and non-profit organisations as well as citizen groups that recognize, value and actively take care of tangible and intangible heritage.