

Cross border multi venue seminar “Visiting neighbours”

20.-23. August, 2018
Estonia – Latvia - Lithuania

Conclusions

The group of experts from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia performed an expedition through the three Baltic countries visiting three different sites and holding three seminars:

Heritage conservation in shrinking regions in Viljandi, Estonia

From endangered to success story in Rundāle, Latvia

Protection of archaeological heritage: success stories and challenges in Kernave, Lithuania.

After the expedition, seminars and discussions, the group of experts have come to conclusions:

The work of Baltic heritage committee has been useful and productive giving chance to exchange information, experience and case studies in heritage preservation, as well as carry out common projects.

There is need for exchange of experts, knowledge and organise common site visits in order to see different attitudes to preservation issues and possible developments.

The project of cross border multi venue seminar has highlighted common problems to heritage preservation issues and possible scenarios for dealing with them, e.g. town planning strategies, threats to heritage site's due to ownership problems, illegal archaeological excavations and different approaches.

Several case studies (Viljandi town, Rietavas municipality, Abgunste manor, Preiļi municipality, Rundāle palace, Kernave archaeological site) has proved great potential of heritage objects, if treated with awareness, enthusiasm and deep knowledge in heritage preservation.

It is very important to spread the information of good practices in heritage preservation, by presenting the saved heritage objects, revealing different models in heritage management (e.g. example of Liepupe manor, Abgunste manor, Rundāle palace, Pedvāle open air museum in Latvia, Rietavas town, Kernave in Lithuania, Seaplane harbour, Rotermann, Grand palace hotel in Viljandi, Tartu railway station in Estonia). The stories presented show that both, municipalities as well as private owners have similar possibilities in developing heritage sites as public attractions either by commercial functions working on business conditions or creative centres where preservation work is based on enthusiastic freelance work and different cultural activities.

There is crucial need for more active communication among national heritage institutions, especially middle level management and experts, as well as develop better heritage communication to public – heritage owners, municipalities. Case studies presented during the seminars showed that owners rely very much on national authorities responsible for heritage preservation, therefore proper communication is very essential in order not to scare them away.

Open, clear communication and dialogue is very important in protection of archaeological sites – case of Estonia highlights the good practice of training, issuing certificates and dialogue with metal detector users as their hobby. It is very essential as well to strengthen the education of archaeologists in higher education level.

The multi venue seminar has been successful giving chance to see one by one different sites, discuss them on the spot. All the members agree to seek for possibilities to organize the expedition seminars on regular basis, possible transformation to regular heritage summer school (analogue to museum summer school) every two or three years depending on possibilities.

Concentrate on specific topics for seminars involving certain experts as well as work on sites with practical activities.

Seek for possible long term funding for Baltic Heritage school implementation.