



Working Group on
Heritage Co-operation

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Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea States
Working Group on Building Preservation and Maintenance in Practice

Progress Report

Mandate given by Monitoring Group

The ministers of culture of the Baltic Sea States met in Gdansk in 1999 with the agreement that cultural heritage should be included in the co-operation. “Building Preservation and Maintenance in Practice” was chosen as one of the key issues in this co-operation. Co-ordinators for a working group on this field are the governmental authorities of Latvia and Sweden.

Aims and Goals

The built environment of the Baltic Sea area is characterized by the natural resources of the region – wood and timber, limestone, granite, iron etc. Traditional building materials, based on these resources, were used in restoration and new building up til World War II, when “modern” materials came on the market. A sustainable preservation of our common built heritage is dependent on a reintroduction and continuous use of traditional materials and skills.

The main aims and goals of the working group are:

- The establishing of codes of ethics for conservation and restoration
- The survival of traditional crafts and skills
- The supply of traditional building materials

The use of our heritage as a promoter of regional development is continuously discussed in the working group.

Work Programme

The group agreed upon a work programme in Tallinn in February 2001. The programme is based on the assumption that the most effective way to organize common activities is to

use existing institutions, reports and projects – and, when desirable, raise them to “Baltic Sea level”. Each participating country is responsible for at least one “activity”:

- seminars and workshops – to be arranged on Baltic Sea level
- existing reports and manuals – to be collected and translated
- common web-site – to be established

Results

Workshops and seminars for craftsmen, historians, restorers and architects

There is a great demand for common workshops and seminars – for both craftsmen and other professionals. The first workshops were organized in connection to the Swedish-Latvian co-operation and to other on-going projects.

The “size” of the workshops must be rather limited – due to the many languages and the objective of common training and understanding. The national languages around the Baltic Sea are parts of the basis for craftsmanship and traditional skills. English may sometimes be used in an introduction but for the complete understanding interpretation is necessary.

1. Timber work and carpentry

In connection with the restoration of the manor house at Unguri, Latvia, a one-week training workshop was organized 11-15 June 2001.

Participants from Estonia, Latvia and Sweden.

2. Lime wash, lime paint

In connection to the restoration of the former synagogue in Sabile, Latvia, a workshop was organized in August.

Participants from Estonia, Latvia, Finland, and Sweden.

3. Methods on investigation, analysis and design (“Pre project” methodology)

A seminar to be organized in Vilnius, Lithuania – concentrating on an exchange of experiences, concerning different surveying and investigating methods. Practical “working together” in connection with the preparing of a restoration project (masonry building).

Experiences from the Estonian and Latvian co-operation with Sweden (1998-2001) should also be presented and discussed.

Date: Beginning of October 2001

Collection (and translation) of reports and manuals

Establishing surveys and networks

Several countries have produced research reports, manuals and various information sheets on the availability of traditional building methods and materials, producer’s etc. It is a task for the working group to initiate collection of existing reports from the different countries and, later, to bring about a translation of chosen parts of these reports into the respective languages. It is also a task to produce surveys of producers and suppliers of rare materials and to support the creation of experts’ networks.

4. Production and use of tar

In each country people involved in tar burning should be spotted and contacted - in order to support the creation of a "tar network". In Norway an investigation and research on tar has recently been carried out. A report is shortly to be published and the English summary should be distributed to all the working group members.

Date: first report September 2001 (responsible country: Norway)

5. Production and supply of window glass

There is a need for glass panes of different qualities. The first task is here to obtain an overview of the possibilities to find the desired (traditional) qualities within the Baltic Sea region. In a later stage, some glassworks should be contacted in order to start new production (experiments are being made at Rejmyre, Sweden, and in Latvia).

Date: first report, September 2001 (responsible country: Poland)

6. Production and use of building lime

Collection (and translation) of reports and manuals. A lot of written material has been produced and published in this field (in the Nordic countries). The task is to make a first choice, which should be presented on the next working group meeting.

Date: first report September 2001 (responsible country: Finland)

Information centres, film and web-site

The Nordic countries have regional educational and information centres on building restoration. In Sweden and Finland there are several so called information centres on building conservation. Raadvad in Denmark "is a centre concerned with knowledge and information regarding the conservation and restoration of the architectural heritage, traditional craft skills and traditional building materials".

7. Regional information centres

Within the Estonian-Swedish co-operation project a study tour to centres in Sweden has been arranged (June 2001). Three persons from the information centre in Kalamaja participated. Representatives from Latvia and Lithuania took part as well.

8. Film

A film "Kalamaja – possibilities of a Wooden Town" (ca 45 minutes) was produced within the Estonian-Swedish co-operation project (Director: Marko Raat). The film was awarded the prize for "Best Documentary Film" at the first Europa Nostra Film Festival in Dobbiaco/Toblach in March 2001. So far the film has been shown in Swedish and Estonian TV channels. The working group participants are supporting in promoting the film in their respective countries. English resp. Swedish versions have been distributed.

A short English version (ca 12-14 minutes) of the film has been made and will be shown at the Ministers meeting in Copenhagen and at an Europa Nostra meeting in Riga.

9. A common web-site

The web-site is connected to the site of the CBSS (Council on Baltic Sea States). The object of the site is – initially - to inform about the co-operation and to connect to other sites of common interest.

The information on the web-site (in its first stage):

- Information about the working group, about institutions in each country
- Links to the WEB-sites of the national boards, of universities, information centres etc.
- Ongoing international projects
- Translated literature, information sheets
- Experts' networks, contact persons
- Workshops and seminars

Problems in fulfilling the task

Lack of money, lack of time (this will be developed).

The Latvian-Swedish co-operation project is financed through the governmental "Baltic Sea Billion". Part of this money will be used for projects, initiated by the working group. The Nordic Council of Ministers could be a possible financier –as could the Swedish Institute and other national institutes - for chosen, specified projects.

Future work and long term plans

During the meeting in Tallinn a round table presentation was made concerning the needs, ongoing projects and possible contributions from all participating countries. This presentation is used as the basis for the first work programme (2001-02) and it contains ideas for future co-operation subjects:

- straw and reed for covering of roofs
 - the burning and use of tar
 - the use of lead in building restoration
 - methods for timber works
 - production of tiles
 - lime burning and the use of lime plaster
 - supply of window glass
 - black smiths work
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- master certification, licence systems, permits
 - common "ethics" for craftsmen working on wooden houses
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- collecting information sheets and working descriptions on materials for building restoration and
 - translation of the same into local languages
 - importance of practical examples
 - " the pre project methodology", i.e. what should be done (and how) before the start of the conservation and restoration in practice

Next working group meeting will be held in October 2001 in Lithuania.