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## POLISH CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE AIMS OF THE FARO CONVENTION

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## **1. THE CHANGING APPROACH TO HERITAGE. AN INTRODUCTION.**

The Faro Convention takes an integrated approach to cultural heritage, underlining the direct link between heritage and a prosperous society, and the major role that awareness of self-identity plays in social capital. The Convention's provisions call for a commitment on the part of authorities to create conditions – legal and other – for an inclusive and interdisciplinary approach to heritage use by society.

This approach is the result of changes in the way heritage is perceived and understood by experts, authorities and society. In the past, monuments were understood by conservators and art historians as isolated buildings (or groups of buildings), without any connection to their surroundings or contemporary society. They were considered individual tokens of history and studied as such. Over time, attitudes changed and the spatial, socio-historical and, so to speak, ethnographic context of monuments was acknowledged, in relation to other human activities (such as handicrafts or traditional music), thus giving less tangible elements of the past the place they deserved. That in turn led to the realisation that contemporary society is (or can be) connected to its historical background and heritage. This relationship manifests itself through interest, care and use in everyday life, for example through local policy making or entrepreneurship that draws on heritage.

These shifts in the understanding of heritage reflect a changing perception of its value. Historic, scientific and artistic values are fundamental for describing heritage. They focus on research linked directly to the very essence of a monument and its characteristics, e.g. the materials used to build it, artistry of execution, the history of its reconstruction or of its ownership. But as state management has developed, the legal requirements to be met by the owners of monuments in terms of their care have become more specific. As the number of monuments owned by authorities grew, heritage assets began to form the subject of financial assessments, as ownership of listed monuments became closely connected with public expenditure.

Then came an awareness that cultural heritage had the potential to generate revenue, and that financing monuments should be treated as an investment, not an expense. In this way, heritage came to the attention of economists and gradually began to be investigated as a distinct part of the cultural economy. The specific role that heritage plays in societies did not

go unnoticed by sociologists either. The public value of heritage (linked with local development, both economic and social) was revealed. It was discovered that heritage has the potential to make a place special, and more amenable for people to live in. A monument can be an interesting leisure and recreation spot. It generates entrepreneurship, by enhancing common cultural activities or through the businesses that spring up around it. It also plays a part in building the community itself, as a source of common identity.

These observations also stemmed from a new vision of the decisive role of society, as democratic mechanisms began to develop along more inclusive lines, recognising crucial responsibilities within communities. There is greater interest in local affairs now, with more grassroots initiatives centred around things that matter to local inhabitants. People want to have a say in a wider range of everyday issues that affect their surroundings, heritage included. In some communities, residents already had a deep appreciation of the value of heritage and sought to protect it. In certain cases, it was a matter of imposing an inclusive approach to heritage on the authorities. In others, it was governments that had to make the first move, generating or improving awareness of the role of heritage, in order to gain public support for activities related to heritage - investments or, more generally, local development policies based on heritage.

The principles enshrined in the Faro Convention mirror this stage in the development of our societies, promoting as they do a more complex understanding and definition of cultural heritage. No longer is cultural heritage merely a monument, or an intangible aspect connected thereto. Far from merely bearing witness to human history, it is an important element of civilisation, one that plays a crucial role in the everyday life of societies and has a significant bearing on the direction of development and the economy.

## 2. HERITAGE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN POLAND. AN OVERVIEW

A key measure of democracy – understood as the population’s involvement in decision making and their responsibility for the common good – is undoubtedly the degree to which civil society manifests itself through grassroots activities, its presence and visibility. What is the extent of Polish civil society engagement in cultural heritage? This study will attempt to provide an overview of the current situation through selected examples of activities run by civil society institutions: NGOs (associations and foundations), social economy operators and academia.

### *The legal framework*

Various articles of the Polish Constitution refer to cultural heritage in terms of its multiple meanings and the roles incumbent on society. Poland shall:

- “safeguard the national heritage and shall ensure the protection of the natural environment pursuant to the principles of sustainable development” (Article 5)
- “provide conditions for the people's equal access to the products of culture which are the source of the Nation's identity, continuity and development” (Article 6).
- “ensure Polish citizens belonging to national or ethnic minorities the freedom to maintain and develop their own language, to maintain customs and traditions, and to develop their own culture. National and ethnic minorities shall have the right to establish educational and cultural institutions, institutions designed to protect religious identity, as well as to participate in the resolution of matters connected with their cultural identity” (Article 35)
- ensure “freedom of artistic creation and scientific research as well as dissemination of the fruits thereof, the freedom to teach and to enjoy the products of culture...” (Article 73).

As a set of political principles regulating the governance of a state in relation to the rights of its inhabitants, the Polish Constitution ensures the pursuit of citizens’ democratic rights in relation to heritage and activities connected with it.

When it comes to areas of public life related to heritage and civil society, several laws stand out, foremost among them the Law on the Protection and Care of Monuments which enables individuals, legal entities or other organisations to be appointed as “**social guardians of monuments**” on a voluntary basis. A card issued by a district governor certifies the right of

the holder to reprimand anyone caught breaking the rules on the protection and care of monuments. The function of the guardians is to undertake tasks related to the preservation of monuments' value, to keep them in the best possible condition and to disseminate knowledge of monuments.

Some districts provide training for aspiring social guardians, including in co-operation with NGOs. Although it is difficult to assess the exact number of social guardians in Poland, the following examples may be of help:

- The city of Krakow (a city with district status) has appointed 30 guardians since 2005 (all of them individuals), but it is not known whether all those appointed are still active at present. In the city of Łódź, 48 guardians have been appointed since 2006.
- The region of Opole, in which there are 11 districts, only gives information on where the guardians operate (in one city and four districts), without giving their exact number.
- The number of guardians in Warsaw is not published, but the city has also teamed up with local NGOs to form “sectoral social dialogue committees” to launch initiatives and act as advisory bodies. The goal is to enhance co-operation between non-governmental organisations and officials. Their tasks include: co-authoring and assessing local draft legislation, participation in grant award panels and in working groups. One of the 29 committees currently in operation is dedicated to the protection of monuments and has thirteen NGOs among its members.

Other legislation of relevance to this study is the Law on Public Benefit Activities and Volunteerism, the Law on Associations and the Law on Foundations. Together, these three instruments regulate the right of association and active participation in public life. The last two are concerned with the different legal forms of NGOs and specify the goals that such organisations may pursue (public benefit). The Law on Public Benefit Activities and Volunteerism regulates all matters relating to voluntary work.

### ***The importance of NGOs***

There are around 117 000 NGOs in Poland and, of these, some 11 000 list “culture and art” as at least one of their areas of activity (Charycka, Gumkowska 2018).

Earlier cultural heritage-oriented research indicates that about 7 000 of them are active in the cultural heritage field, with “protection of monuments and memorial sites, maintaining national traditions” or “maintaining customs, local and regional traditions, practices and folk culture” among their stated objects (Adamiak, Charycka 2015: 16)

Based on declared field of activity, the NGOs can be broken down as follows:

- 72% culture and the arts,
- 8% – education,
- 6% – local development,
- 5% – sport tourism, recreation, hobby,
- 3% – social services and assistance.

The NGOs in question engage in various activities related to cultural heritage, furthermore:

- education and promotion of heritage (95%),
- protecting and maintaining intangible heritage (69%)
- compiling inventories and documenting intangible heritage (44%).
- conservation and maintenance of monuments (33%)
- compiling inventories and documenting monuments (31%).

Only 14% of them lobby for legal recognition of monuments and engage in projects designed to adapt monuments to new functions (Adamiak, Charycka 2015: 22).

### ***The role of volunteers***

According to the website for non-governmental organisations, run by the Klon/Jawor Association ([www.ngo.pl](http://www.ngo.pl)), 63% of NGOs work with volunteers and almost half of all NGOs active in the cultural heritage field rely entirely on volunteers. There is also extensive support from non-member volunteers, with 81% of NGOs benefiting from assistance of this kind.

Interestingly, only 11% of the NGOs surveyed reported using non-member volunteers as a way of encouraging local community involvement. 10% use them in order to promote heritage and disseminate knowledge about heritage, and only 7% have expert volunteers offering professional guidance. Most NGOs turn to volunteers because they do not have

enough regular members or employees to cope with the workload (30%), or because they need to reduce labour costs (16%).

Local authorities are the main source of financing for the voluntary activities of NGOs active in cultural heritage while 19% of voluntary activities rely on government funding and 14% are financed by the European Union (Adamiak, Charycka 2015: 26-27).

### ***Institutional support for NGOs***

Non-governmental and voluntary activities related to cultural heritage are supported to some extent by central government through cultural institutions.

One such example is “Together for heritage”, a programme run by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage exclusively for NGOs whose main goal is to provide financial support for cultural heritage projects involving volunteers. Since 2016, the Institute has supported nearly 90 NGO projects involving around 1 000 volunteers. The Institute also promotes heritage volunteering through advertising in social media and on national TV, and by collecting factual literature about selected projects (available online and in print, free of charge). It also produces a day-planner with inserted heritage trivia from co-financed projects (also free of charge). The dedicated Facebook wall promotes co-financed projects and provides information about available funding and other opportunities likely to be of interest to NGOs, volunteers and the general public.

The Institute hosts conferences for NGOs in order to provide information about grants and support skills development. Yearly conferences are accompanied by workshops and presentations on available programmes, for example Solidarity Corps. The 2019 conference was dedicated to international co-operation between NGOs and volunteers. It was co-organised by the European Heritage Volunteers Foundation, the Chronić Dobro Foundation and the International Cultural Centre in Krakow. Over 90 participants and about 35 NGOs from 16 countries came together to share ideas and experience.

Since 2019, support for NGOs which employ volunteers has also come from Polonika - the National Institute of Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad. The scheme supports social involvement in the protection of Polish tangible cultural heritage beyond the country's borders.

The projects revolve around volunteer camps, tours, study visits and research with a view to exploring and protecting the national heritage outside the territory of modern-day Poland.

### ***Social economy actors***

Another important area of civil life is the social economy, with business models focused on employee welfare and solidarity. Profit-making, in other words, is not the primary goal of such organisations. Social economy operators belong to both the co-operative and the non-governmental sector, and include foundations, co-operatives of persons with disabilities, social co-operatives, associations and others. One of the most important goals of the social economy is to promote the inclusion of people who cannot fully participate in social or professional life. That does not just mean creating workplaces designed for employees with special needs. It also implies an inclusive approach, giving employees a decisive role in the organisation and creation of jobs for people at risk of exclusion (the poor, those leaving foster care and others).

Social enterprises are the principal actors in this area. NGOs, social co-operatives and church organisations can be granted social enterprise status provided that they plough their profits into activities of benefit to the community or the social and occupational inclusion of employees, are managed in a participatory way and at least 30% of their employees are considered to be at risk of exclusion. The Law on Social Co-operatives provides the legal framework for the functioning of social enterprises.

The National Programme for Social Economy Development 2023 “The Economy of Social Solidarity” sets out the central policy on social services development, support for social inclusion through economic activities and enhancement of the role of the solidarity economy. There are four strands to the Programme:

- Solidarity in local communities
- Solidarity in the labour market
- Competitive social entrepreneurship
- The solidarity society.

There are 1 235 social enterprises registered in the Ministry database (although some experts put the number at around 3 000). According to the available data, 347 of them are

active in the field of education and culture. That is not the only area where heritage activities are pursued, however, as heritage can also be a feature of activities in the culinary field, tourism and recreation, food production and processing, or agriculture. Social enterprises operate in these sectors too. Unfortunately, it is impossible to say how many of them are engaged in ventures related to cultural heritage.

### ***Academic involvement***

Yet another area of civil society that needs to be considered in relation to cultural heritage is academia. There are 130 public universities and 262 non-public ones (including 12 ecclesiastical institutions) in Poland, with over 1 200 000 students, 73% of whom attend public universities (Statistics Poland 2019). Around 55% of students in Poland opt to study social sciences, human sciences, economics or administration. Conservation and restoration faculties exist at two fine arts academies and one university; all three institutions are state-run.

History (as a separate faculty or within the human science faculty) is taught at 31 universities (both public and private). History of art and archaeology (within the history or human science faculties) are taught at 11 universities (public and private). Cultural heritage management (as part of the history faculty) is available at three universities (one private, one public and one ecclesiastical, with the latter being financed along the same lines as public universities).

Cultural heritage research features more prominently than before in economics, sociology and tourism faculties (either as a course topic or as an area of interest covered by a specific researcher), but its role is still negligible and no statistics are available in this area. There are also several associations active in academia, for instance the Scientific Association of Polish Archaeologists, Historical Monuments & Art Conservators Association Poland, or the Scientific Club for the Legal Protection of Cultural Property at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow.

### 3. HERITAGE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN POLAND: SELECTED GOOD PRACTICES

This section contains examples of activities or projects implemented by civil society organisations in Poland. To highlight their connection with the basic tenets of the Faro Convention, the examples will be aligned with the relevant provisions of the Convention.

#### GLOBAL INITIATIVES

- A. Turystyka Kulturowa [Cultural Tourism] online scientific journal  
([www.turystykakulturowa.org](http://www.turystykakulturowa.org))



**TURYSTYKA  
KULTUROWA**  
CZASOPISMO NAUKOWE

Published by **Kultur.pl Travel Agency** (run by tourist guides and academic scholars), this is an open access, peer-reviewed, bimonthly scientific journal. It was founded in 2008 to meet the need for a platform dedicated to scientific and professional literature on cultural tourism in Poland. The project started as a form of co-operation among practitioners (tourist guides and tour leaders) and scholars from around the country, to provide an opportunity for broad-based, professional discussions on multiple aspects of cultural tourism.

Available online, the journal contains a section entitled “Potential analysis”, which looks at the potential of specific places, cultural routes or microregions to develop cultural tourism. All the articles are accompanied by an abstract in English and often issues (over 100 published since 2008) are devoted to a specific topic.

Part of the journal is devoted to the wide promotion of cultural tourism, without indexed or peer-reviewed content, which is published separately on the public information website [www.turystykakulturowa.eu](http://www.turystykakulturowa.eu). The section entitled “Places and Routes” describes Polish and European cultural routes, Polish microregions and urban regions, with historical and cultural background information, interviews with managers, competent authorities and others. The website also publishes information about events, travel guide reviews, details of academic conferences, etc.

***Relevance to the Faro Convention:***

- Article 7 – Cultural heritage and dialogue
  - reflection on the ethics and methods of presentation of cultural heritage as well as respect for diversity of interpretations;
- Article 10 – Cultural heritage and economic activity
  - awareness and use of the economic potential of cultural heritage;
- Article 13 – Cultural heritage and knowledge
  - interdisciplinary research on cultural heritage, heritage communities, the environment and their inter-relationship;
- Article 14 – Cultural heritage and the information society
  - resolving obstacles to access to information relating to cultural heritage, particularly for educational purposes, whilst protecting intellectual property rights.

B. ***Karta*** – a quarterly history journal, dedicated to the 20th-century history of Poland and Central and Eastern Europe ([www.karta.org.pl](http://www.karta.org.pl))



©Ośrodek KARTA, Journal edition

The **Karta Centre Foundation** focuses on educational and publishing activities and has also begun creating social archives in Poland, developing the “Open Archiving System” (described in detail as an example of good practice on the Strategy 21 website: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/strategy-21>) which is available free of charge to foundations, associations, municipal libraries and informal groups. To sustain

that initiative, the Social Archives Centre – a national cultural institution – was set up in 2020 as part of a joint initiative with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

The Foundation's flagship activity is the quarterly history journal *Karta*, which started as an underground publication in 1982. Banned by the Communist authorities, it sought to explore the attitudes of people throughout the oppressed world and the first official issue was eventually published in 1991. From the outset, the focus has been on the archiving of history, and photographs and source texts (memories, journals, documents, testimonies), accompanied by scientific comments from researchers, form the core of the publication. Major topics covered include the history of ethnic minorities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the history of totalitarian oppression as seen through the eyes of those who witnessed it first-hand. The Foundation also publishes other thematic books and series available as e-books and in print (some of them free of charge) and stages exhibitions.

As part of its educational programme, the Foundation runs a number of websites: Learning from history – experience of totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ([www.uczycsiezhistorii.pl](http://www.uczycsiezhistorii.pl)) is a platform for publishing educational projects dedicated to the history of Poland and its neighbours and human rights; Poland 1926 ([www.polska1926.pl](http://www.polska1926.pl)) contains lists of the citizens of the Second Polish Republic, providing a collective portrait of the latter; War and Memory ([www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de/pl](http://www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de/pl)), a product of Russo-Polish-German co-operation, is available in 5 languages and is dedicated to archive material and documented testimonies (videos and audio recordings) of forced labour in the period 1939-45.

***Relevance to the Faro Convention:***

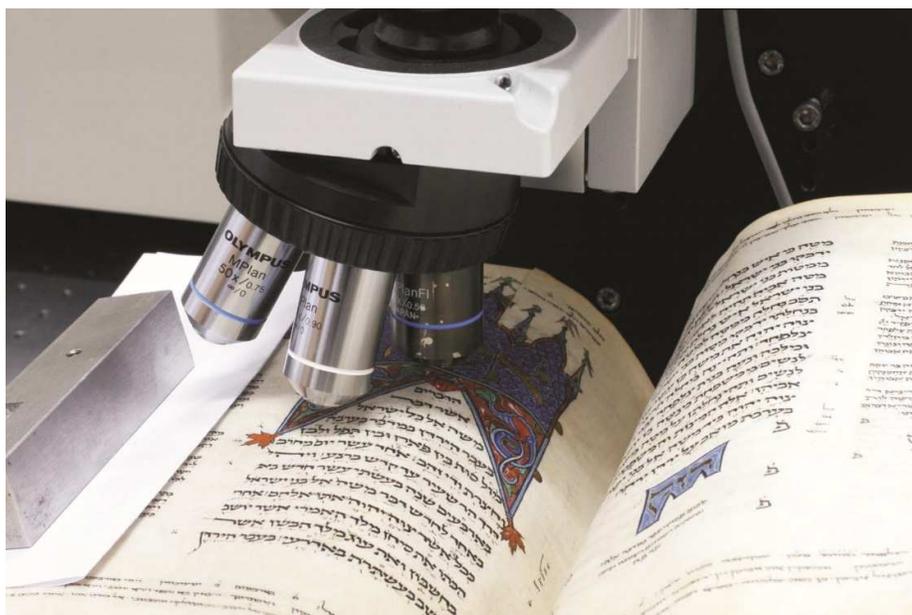
- Article 7 – Cultural heritage and dialogue
  - reflection on the ethics and methods of presentation of cultural heritage, as well as respect for diversity of interpretations;
  - establishing processes for conciliation to deal equitably with situations where contradictory values are attached to the same cultural heritage by different communities;
  - developing knowledge of cultural heritage as a means to facilitate peaceful co-existence by promoting trust and mutual understanding with a view to resolution and prevention of conflicts;

- Article 12 – Access to cultural heritage and democratic participation
  - process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage; public reflection and debate on the opportunities and challenges which the cultural heritage represents.



©Osrodek KARTA, Journal edition

C. Polish Distributed Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science ([www.e-rihs.pl](http://www.e-rihs.pl))



©Władysław Wrzeszcz, Research on the origin and technology of the medieval Hebrew Torah from the collection of the Ossolinski Institute in Wrocław

A grassroots consortium of 13 research centres<sup>1</sup>, **E-RIHS.PL** was created in 2015 to enable cultural heritage actors to have historic objects examined using physicochemical methods. Member laboratories make their facilities available free of charge to restorers, art historians, archaeologists and museum curators in order to develop and promote an integrated system of support in accessing modern methods of physical and chemical testing for heritage researchers, and in order to share research results and disseminate knowledge of historic objects and thus cultural heritage.

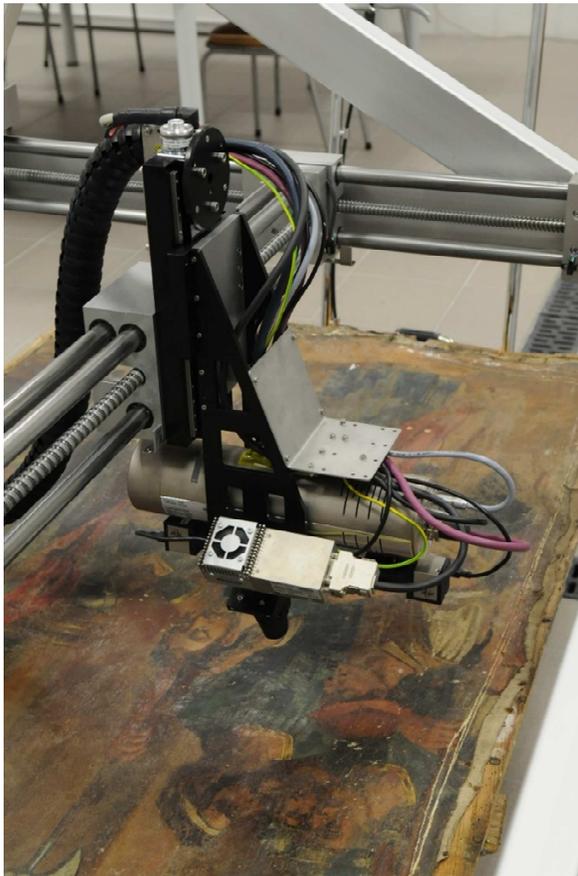
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<sup>1</sup> Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (coordinator), Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, Historical Layers Research Centre at the University of Science and Technology in Krakow, Institute of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology in Warsaw, Jerzy Haber Institute of Catalysis and Surface Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków, Szewalski Institute of Fluid-Flow Machinery, Polish Academy of Sciences in Gdańsk, Laboratory of Analysis and Non-destructive Investigation of Heritage Objects in the National Museum in Kraków, National Centre for Nuclear Research at the Warsaw University of Technology, Cracow University of Economics, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Biological and Chemical Research Centre at Warsaw University, University of Wrocław

To date, nearly 40 projects have been approved for free laboratory testing via annual calls for proposals. The consortium also organises conferences and workshops and is engaged in preparations for Poland's accession to and participation in the European Research Infrastructure for Scientific Heritage.

***Relevance to the Faro Convention:***

- Article 13 – Cultural heritage and knowledge
  - interdisciplinary research on cultural heritage, heritage communities, the environment and their inter-relationship; also: interdisciplinary research on cultural heritage, heritage communities, the environment and their inter-relationship;
- Article 14 – Cultural heritage and the information society
  - supporting internationally compatible standards for the study, conservation, enhancement and security of cultural heritage, whilst combating illicit trafficking in cultural property.



©P. Targowski, Painting testing method

D. “Culinary tourism” scientific conference

[www.vistulahospitality.edu.pl/en](http://www.vistulahospitality.edu.pl/en)



©Piotr Dominik, Regional food showcase at the conference

Organised by the **Vistula School of Hospitality** (a non-public, multicultural and international university based in Warsaw), this annual conference is dedicated to international researchers interested in culinary tourism, to practitioners (e.g. producers of regional food) and regional leaders, such as organisations, producers’ bodies and the tourism sector. Its aim is to present relevant research findings, and to identify and analyse opportunities and threats to the development of culinary tourism.

Cuisine is regarded as an important part of a living tradition, as a driver of local business growth and a tool for promoting places and microregions. The conference is open to an international audience and looks at various topics, with a different overarching theme every year, such as: “cooking – a showcase of tourist regions”, or “culinary routes as a way

to attract tourists to the region”. The conferences have been taking place since 2014 and the proceedings are published afterwards.

***Relevance to the Faro Convention:***

- Article 9 – Sustainable use of the cultural heritage
  - promotion of the use of materials, techniques and skills based on tradition, and exploring their potential for contemporary applications;
- Article 10 – Cultural heritage and economic activity
  - raising awareness and utilising the economic potential of the cultural heritage;
- Article 13 – Cultural heritage and knowledge
  - encouraging interdisciplinary research on cultural heritage, heritage communities, the environment and their inter-relationship; encouraging continuous professional training and the exchange of knowledge and skills, both within and outside the educational system.



©Piotr Dominik, Annual conference

## E. Better access to heritage for the visually impaired

# MAZOWIECKIE STOWARZYSZENIE PRACY DLA NIEPEŁNOSPRAWNYCH DE FACTO



©Stowarzyszenie De Facto, Tactile architectonic model

The activities of the **Mazovian Association of Labour for Disabled Persons “De Facto”** (Płock, Central Poland) focus on offering support to people with disabilities – especially the visually impaired – in social and occupational integration, in training, education and information. Inclusion projects are mostly based on therapy workshops, occupational integration centres, legal, psychological and work-related counselling, co-operation with local authorities and cultural education.

Research conducted by the association revealed that almost half of the visually impaired are unfamiliar with museums or monuments, as the lack of specially adapted presentation methods at sites and museums (only 11% of museums and galleries in Poland offer audio descriptions) is a major obstacle to a successful visitor experience. Two projects have been

developed so far: one is featured as an example of good practice on the Council of Europe's Strategy 21 website (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/-/100-audio-descriptions-of-monuments-of-history-100-years-of-independence>) and the other is pressing ahead with its planned activities.

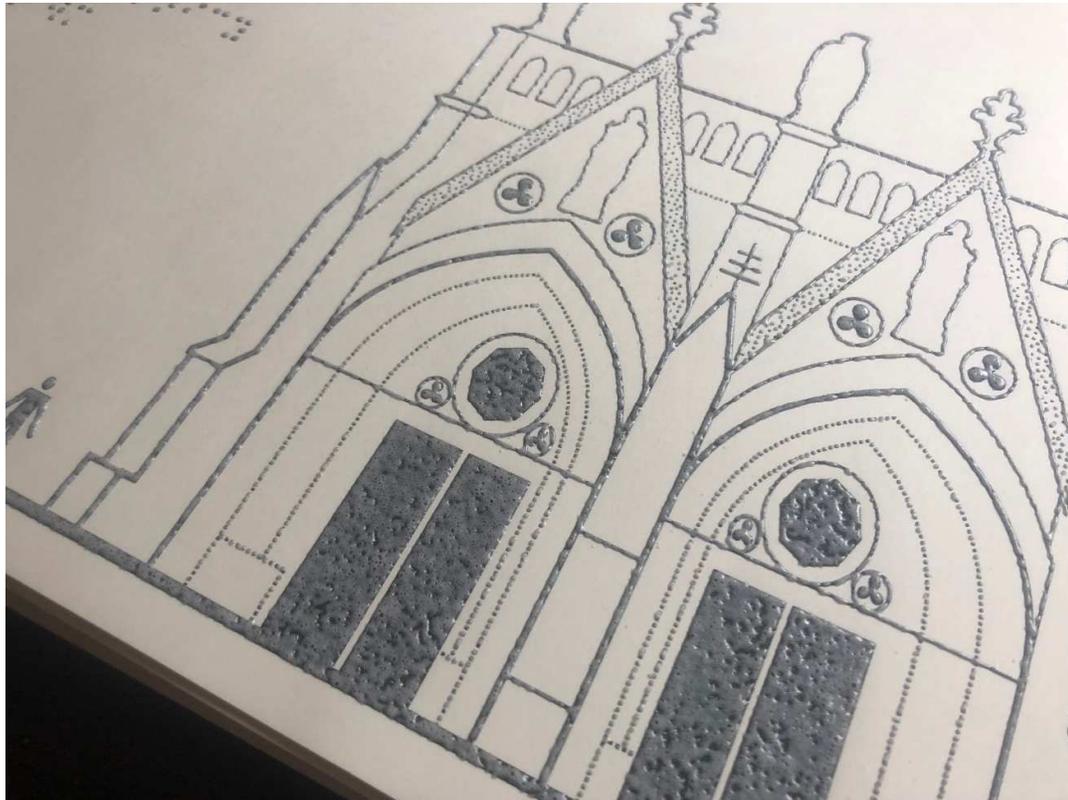
Participants in the two projects helped to produce 105 audio descriptions, available online at <http://www.ekiosk.defacto.org.pl/pomniki/>. The descriptions relate to sites designated as historical monuments by decree of the President of Poland, a category that includes most of the Polish sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The audio descriptions were forwarded to the sites in question for use by tourists, thus involving them in the process of making heritage more accessible to people with special needs. They were prepared by over 200 high school student volunteers (from seven schools around Poland), who received professional training in audio description methods and procedures, delivered both by experts and by individuals with visual impairments. These workshops provided an opportunity for students to get to know people with visual impairments and to gain an insight into how they perceive the world around them.

Audio descriptions are a good tool for people who have lost their sight but other tools, such as descriptions printed in Braille, are more useful for those who were born blind. Depending on the needs of the target audience, the association prepared different albums consisting of audio files or Braille prints and over 50 tactile graphics of 26 chosen sites. The albums have been distributed to over 1 000 people free of charge. The association also held an inclusive workshop at the Gdańsk shipyard (the birthplace of Solidarity), as a way to familiarise visually impaired people with heritage.

***Relevance to the Faro Convention:***

- Article 11 – The organisation of public responsibilities for cultural heritage
  - implementing voluntary initiatives which complement the roles of public authorities;
- Article 12 – Access to cultural heritage and democratic participation
  - improving access to the heritage, especially among young people and the disadvantaged, in order to raise awareness about its value, the need to maintain and preserve it, and the benefits which may be derived from it;
- Article 14 – Cultural heritage and the information society

- initiatives which promote the quality of contents and endeavour to secure diversity of languages and cultures in the information society;
- seeking to resolve obstacles to access to information relating to cultural heritage, particularly for educational purposes, whilst protecting intellectual property rights.



©Stowarzyszenie De Facto, Tactile graphics prepared by De Facto Association

# LOCAL INITIATIVES



F. **Wood Culture** ([www.mlynpapiernia.org.pl](http://www.mlynpapiernia.org.pl))



©Association for the Preservation of Heritage "Paper Mill", webpage

The **Association for the Preservation of Heritage "Paper Mill"** is active in preserving cultural and natural heritage through education and awareness raising and strengthening relations between communities through learning about their cultures. Activities are centred around the restoration of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century paper mill complex in Barlinek (abandoned in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and slated for demolition) and an early 18<sup>th</sup>-century half-timbered manor house and park in Niepołtcko. Both sites are in north-western Poland.

The association was formed by a group of students and young architects (linked to the youth section of ICOMOS Poland) that came to the rescue of the manor house in the early 1980s and turned it into a scientific and education centre devoted to heritage preservation. In 2009 the association became the owner of the manor house and surrounding parklands where work is still ongoing today.

Although mostly focused on the preservation of wooden architecture, the association also attaches great importance to landscape preservation. It takes part in and organises events such as debates and lectures, including during European Heritage Days. Its members provide professional guidance in maintaining historic architecture and work with foreign organisations (mostly German ones, focusing on common cultural landscape).

The projects implemented by the association are aimed at:

- amateurs and professionals (in need of specialised knowledge),
- children, adolescents and adults (to familiarise them with heritage),
- neighbours and tourists (visiting monuments and exploring neighbouring landscapes to understand the link between nature and culture),
- owners of historic buildings, local authorities and other organisations (since effective preservation of cultural and natural heritage requires co-operation on several fronts).

The Wood Culture project sought to introduce young volunteers to traditional carpentry techniques through summer camps (involving manual work, theory and history, and trekking in the local area) in 2016, 2017 and 2019. The youngsters learned new skills, working on the reconstruction of the wooden bell tower at the Niepołcko church and the porch of the paper mill – both original elements which, although very well documented, had not been preserved – and helping to restore the paper mill sifter so that it could be brought back into operation. Participants were awarded a “half-timbered architecture carpenter assistant” certificate. The fruits of their labours can be seen in a video of the 2016 camp (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=920Qxch4lkc>).

***Relevance to the Faro Convention:***

- Article 8 – Environment, heritage and quality of life
  - reinforcing social cohesion by fostering a sense of shared responsibility towards the places in which people live;
- Article 9 – Sustainable use of the cultural heritage
  - promoting principles of sustainable management, and maintenance;
  - promoting the use of materials, techniques and skills based on tradition, and exploring their potential for contemporary applications;
- Article 12 – Access to cultural heritage and democratic participation
  - the process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage;
  - consideration of the value attached by each heritage community to the cultural heritage with which it identifies;

- public reflection and debate on the opportunities and challenges which the cultural heritage represents;
- Article 13 – Cultural heritage and knowledge
  - strengthening the link between cultural heritage education and vocational training.



©Association for the Preservation of Heritage “Paper Mill”, Activities on the webpage

## G. Protecting traditional Pomeranian houses

[www.tump.org.pl/dom-pomorski/](http://www.tump.org.pl/dom-pomorski/)



TOWARZYSTWO  
UPIĘKSZANIA  
MIASTA PUCKA



©TUMP, Volunteers working on a Pomeranian house documentation

Besides the use of a specific variant of the Kashubian dialect, the northern part of Poland's Kashubia region on the Baltic Sea is notable for its so-called Pomeranian houses. Popular from the late 19th until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, this traditional architecture is characterised by its use of red ceramic brick and ceramic tiles, sophisticated carpentry, and the distinctive layout of the homes. The Prussian administration (which ruled the region until 1918) encouraged its spread through the "building police" who recommended that houses be constructed on a particular model and insisted that they meet certain fire safety and hygiene standards. With the advent of capitalism in the region at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, local inhabitants were able to make investments in agriculture and fisheries thanks to a system of loans.

The **Association for the Enhancement of the Town of Puck** (on the Bay of Gdansk) is working to preserve this architectural heritage which, since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, has come under threat as owners have opted to install PVC windows and Styrofoam insulation,

spoiling both the landscape and the built heritage. The Kashubia region being a popular tourist destination, the association seeks to sensitise the local population and owners of Pomeranian houses to the importance of preserving their traditional appearance and to the fact that, with tourists becoming more discerning, such heritage can be a valuable asset and a source of competitive advantage.

The association offers renovation and conservation guidance for owners and managers of Pomeranian houses – in operations connected with secondary plaster work, proper cleaning and protection of masonry. They also encourage local youngsters to learn about heritage, to appreciate its uniqueness and to advocate for its use in sustainable local development.

Two volunteer camps were held in 2018 and 2019 to compile a detailed technical inventory of Pomeranian houses in the region (horizontal and vertical cross-sections, measurements, photographs, address cards of monuments, GIS system validation). Address cards of buildings were handed over to the National Institute of Cultural Heritage (which maintains the archive of listed monuments address cards) and to the Regional Conservator of Monuments.

Through photo competitions, exhibitions and debates, the project also sought to promote good practices in historic building management and use among the local population. Two discussions held during European Heritage Days allowed participants to express their views on the social protection of monuments, with emphasis on the uniqueness of traditional Pomeranian houses. A handbook on Pomeranian houses and their preservation was published and distributed to local residents and promotional leaflets produced to explain their unique features to tourists.

***Relevance to the Faro Convention:***

- Article 8 – Environment, heritage and quality of life
  - enriching the processes of economic, political, social and cultural development and land-use planning, resorting to cultural heritage impact assessments and adopting mitigation strategies where necessary;
  - promoting the objective of quality in contemporary additions to the environment without endangering its cultural values;
- Article 9 – Sustainable use of the cultural heritage

- promoting respect for the integrity of the cultural heritage by ensuring that decisions about change include an understanding of the cultural values involved;
- Article 10 – Cultural heritage and economic activity
  - raising awareness and utilising the economic potential of the cultural heritage;
- Article 12 – Access to cultural heritage and democratic participation
  - public reflection and debate on the opportunities and challenges which the cultural heritage represents;
  - improving access to the heritage, especially among young people and the disadvantaged, in order to raise awareness about its value, the need to maintain and preserve it, and the benefits which may be derived from it;
- Article 14 – Cultural heritage and the information society
  - recognising that the creation of digital contents related to the heritage should not prejudice the conservation of the existing heritage.



©TUMP, Volunteers working on a Pomeranian house documentation

H. Historical tourism and tourist office in Byczyna ([www.perunica.pl](http://www.perunica.pl))



©Perunica, Community activities

Byczyna is a small 13<sup>th</sup>-century town in western Poland, with streets laid out on the traditional pattern, historic buildings and near-intact town walls dating back to 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century. For several years, it was home to an illustrious figure, Maria Cunitz (Cunitia), a 17<sup>th</sup> century scholar and astronomer who corrected some of Johannes Kepler's calculations in the *Rudolphine tables* and developed simpler methods for calculating the trajectories of planets. She published her *Urania Propitia* in Latin and in German in 1650, making this the first astronomy book written in a vernacular language.

The **Perunica Social Co-operative** was created in 2014 by two local NGOs (the Arkona Association and the Volunteer Fire Brigade) and works with other local NGOs and local authorities to achieve the primary goal of the Arkona Association, namely to combat depopulation, brain drain and the impoverishment of social life in Byczyna by focusing on

mobilising the community, raising awareness of local identity and encouraging entrepreneurship based on historic assets.

The co-operative runs a kindergarten called “Mouse Tower” and a tourist office in Byczyna which promotes historical tourism. Founder of the Republic of Byczyna, a tourist route involving treasure hunts and geocaching, the co-operative also offers guided tours with a focus on history, historic team building and educational camps for schoolchildren and families. It runs workshops on Slavic music, dance, mythology, medieval cookery and traditional handicrafts, and offers living history lessons on specific topics. A promotional video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArGsvQRYygU> starring Percival (a Slavic folk metal band), has been produced by the co-operative in association with the municipality of Byczyna.

An important part of the tourist office is the souvenir shop, which sells local handicrafts only (souvenirs, local produce, cosmetics, clothing, etc.) in an effort to support and promote local entrepreneurship and expand the range of goods and services on offer. The co-operative and its members are also active in local life, advocating for the preservation of local cultural landscape and local development based on an awareness of the town’s assets and active community involvement.

***Relevance to the Faro Convention:***

- Article 9 – Sustainable use of the cultural heritage
  - promoting principles of sustainable management, and maintenance;
  - promoting the use of materials, techniques and skills based on tradition, and exploring their potential for contemporary applications;
- Article 10 – Cultural heritage and economic activity
  - ensuring that local policies respect the integrity of the cultural heritage without compromising its inherent values;
- Article 11 – The organisation of public responsibilities for cultural heritage
  - promoting an integrated and well-informed approach by public authorities;
- Article 12 – Access to cultural heritage and democratic participation
  - playing the role of voluntary organisations both as partners in activities and as constructive critics of cultural heritage policies;
- Article 13 – Cultural heritage and knowledge

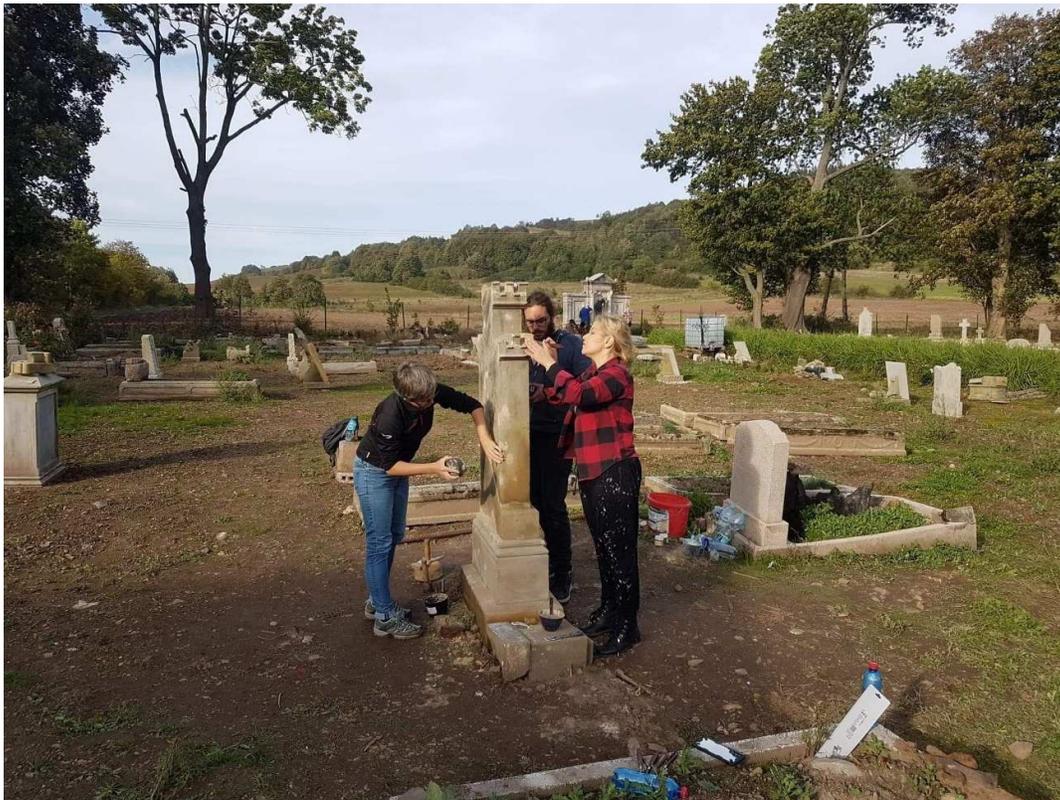
- facilitating the inclusion of the cultural heritage dimension at all levels of education, not necessarily as a subject of study in its own right, but as a fertile source for studies in other subjects.



©Marjonetka, Traditional herbology is one of the community activities

I. Preservation of the former Evangelical cemetery in the village of Gostków

[www.facebook.com/pg/FundacjaAnna](http://www.facebook.com/pg/FundacjaAnna)



©Angelika Babula, Preservation of the former Evangelical cemetery

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the city of Wałbrzych and the surrounding area in western Poland were under Prussian rule and the Evangelical congregation there was given permission to build a church in the village of Gostków, first from timber and then from brick. After World War II, when this part of the German Reich was restored to Poland, most of the German population were deported to Germany and the Evangelical cemetery was abandoned. Years later, when the local authorities decided to sell off the site, two local residents, a mother and daughter, both accountants, decided to buy it in order to preserve the

cemetery as a testament to the village's past. Having been neglected for some 70 years, the cemetery was overgrown and almost no trace of its original function remained, except for the tomb of the Ulrich family and its porcelain plaque bearing the inscription "Hier ruht in Gott Anna Renner" [Here rests in God Anna Renner].

After struggling for over a year in their spare time to clear weeds and bushes, revealing the original paths and tombs, the two women set up a foundation named after Anna Renner – the **Anna Foundation** – to raise funds and secure support for the restoration of the cemetery. In the course of their work, they uncovered a large number of tombstones which had been smashed to pieces, the remains of sculptured figures, some of which had disappeared over the years, and numerous burial plaques bearing the names of former inhabitants. Another year of labouring saw some 70 tombs restored, as the task of piecing together a giant jigsaw puzzle consisting of shattered pieces of stones, plaques and sculptures continued. Many of the tombs were identified by name.

No one involved in the project having any personal connection with the former Evangelical community, their work generated active local interest in learning about the history of the area and also in its preservation, never an easy task when the tangible remains of that history are not well known to the present population and the relationship between the latter and the former inhabitants is faint.

The Foundation has some volunteers and receives help from local businesses; they also work with other foundations, receiving specialised assistance in tombstone renovation, and with German minority groups. The process of discovering local history through the history of the families who used to live in the area continues.

***Relevance to the Faro Convention:***

- Article 7 – Cultural heritage and dialogue
  - establishing processes for conciliation to deal equitably with situations where contradictory values are placed on the same cultural heritage by different communities;
  - developing knowledge of cultural heritage as a resource to facilitate peaceful co-existence by promoting trust and mutual understanding with a view to resolution and prevention of conflicts;
- Article 8 – Environment, heritage and quality of life

- reinforcing social cohesion by fostering a sense of shared responsibility towards the places in which people live;
- Article 11 – The organisation of public responsibilities for cultural heritage
  - non-governmental organisations concerned with heritage conservation acting in the public interest;
- Article 12 – Access to cultural heritage and democratic participation
  - improving access to the heritage, especially among young people and the disadvantaged, in order to raise awareness about its value, the need to maintain and preserve it, and the benefits which may be derived from it.



©Angelika Babula, Preservation of the former Evangelical cemetery

J. **The Art of Rzeszów City Photography** ([www.aparatcaffe.pl](http://www.aparatcaffe.pl))



©Aparat Caffé, Street exhibition of inhabitants dressed up in period clothing and then photographed using traditional techniques

**Aparat Caffé** [Photo Camera Café] is a foundation based in Rzeszów, a city in south-eastern Poland. It has the biggest collection of photographic exhibits in the country (nearly 3 500 analogue photo camera accessories, photographic plates, glass negatives and books) and has been open to visitors since 2017. Its aim is to preserve heritage, to research and promote the photographic traditions of the city and to pass on the skills associated with traditional photography. It also engages in artistic and educational initiatives, rents out analogue photography equipment and – until recently – had been running a specialist library and a social café, now closed due to financial problems. The Foundation works with other organisations, too.

Implemented in co-operation with volunteers, various local actors<sup>2</sup> and the Little Mobile Photo Museum in Poznań (in western Poland), the project focused on audio and video documentation of the memories of people who had worked in local photo workshops in the days of analogue photography. These “Memory Givers” were also asked to participate in research meetings with cultural institutions, as a means of transmitting artisans’ knowledge of traditional photo techniques. Photography enthusiasts were given the opportunity to attend workshops on various traditional photo techniques (silver photography, large format and ambrotype) over a period of 5 days.

In 2018, to mark European Heritage Days, the foundation organised an event linking traditional photography with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of Polish sovereignty. A hundred inhabitants were invited to dress up in period clothing and then photographed using traditional techniques. Another exhibition featured old-style photographs of modern-day residents dressed in period clothes, a unique way for the community to relate to its past.

The foundation published a book (<http://aparatcaffe.pl/inicjatywy/kunst-rzeszowskiej-fotografii/>) and made a film ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iClfIISL6-w&feature=emb\\_err\\_woyt](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iClfIISL6-w&feature=emb_err_woyt)), based on the recorded memories and workshops. The book includes historical texts, archival and modern photos illustrating the photographic traditions of Rzeszów and an outline of the educational activities undertaken. The project culminated in an event to mark the 168<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of local photographer and documentalist Edward Janusz, who was a major figure in the illustrious history of Rzeszów photography: his granddaughter and great granddaughter (both photo artists) were present at the event to celebrate the project’s success.

***Relevance to the Faro Convention:***

- Article 9 – Sustainable use of the cultural heritage
  - promoting the use of materials, techniques and skills based on tradition, and exploring their potential for contemporary applications.
- Article 12 – Access to cultural heritage and democratic participation

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<sup>2</sup> The Regional Museum, the Ethnographic Museum, the Photo Gallery of Rzeszów city, Rzeszów Photographic Association, the Regional and Municipal Library, Rzeszów Foundation

- participation in the process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage;
- improving access to the heritage, especially among young people and the disadvantaged, in order to raise awareness about its value, the need to maintain and preserve it, and the benefits which may be derived from it.
- Article 13 – Cultural heritage and knowledge
  - facilitating the inclusion of the cultural heritage dimension at all levels of education, not necessarily as a subject of study in its own right, but as a fertile source for studies in other subjects.
- Article 14 – Cultural heritage and the information society
  - seeking to resolve obstacles to access to information relating to cultural heritage, particularly for educational purposes, whilst protecting intellectual property rights.



©Aparat Caffè, Event linking traditional photography with the 100th anniversary of the restoration of Polish sovereignty

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This compilation of good practices is obviously just a sample of civil society activities in Poland. It does nevertheless highlight – if only to an extent – the variety of organisations, the heritage they work with, the methods employed, the communities they operate in and the goals pursued. A detailed analysis of the legal situation is beyond the scope of this study, so any changes or updates that might be required in terms of institutional support should be discussed in the relevant fields. For example, the way forward for Polish academia is a near-constant topic of debate these days.

Science and higher education are complex and specific areas, but much more could be said about non-governmental organisations and institutional support for their activities. NGO leaders mention putting their organisations on a sound financial footing as a high priority in the near term (Adamiak, Przewłocka, Zając 2012). But further research reveals other needs as well, especially among organisations that engage in cultural heritage activities. Around 63% of them mention problems with complicated legal regulations.

Simplifying the rules might resolve this issue, but only to some extent, because heritage protection does require certain restrictions and detailed regulations. Better support for NGOs in improving heritage protection skills would appear to be important, therefore. Research findings bear this out, with 40% of NGOs claiming to have insufficient knowledge in the heritage field. In addition, 29% report having experienced difficulties with the formalities surrounding heritage protection (Adamiak, Charycka 2015: 60-61).

Insufficient attention given to heritage in local policies and by local authorities is an issue of concern for cultural heritage NGOs. As many as 57% of them cite this as an obstacle to their activities. Municipalities in Poland have extensive powers in terms of local governance, but when it comes to heritage, they complain of insufficient financing and human resources, with one staff member often being required to shoulder multiple responsibilities. This last tendency unfortunately results in a lack of competences in the heritage protection field (43% of local government officers identified this as a problem).

The protection of heritage and its use for local development is referred to in regulations and local policy documents (planning, development, cultural, regeneration and other policies),

but there are some obvious obstacles to the implementation of these provisions in real life, and at a more advanced level. For example, the basic instrument for self-government policy in planning and implementing activities in relation to monuments and cultural landscape protection, and in the dissemination and promotion of cultural heritage, is the “municipal programme for monuments protection”. This document is binding (as stated in the Law on the Protection and Care of Monuments) and has to be properly monitored and updated every four years. Yet only about one third of municipalities have a valid programme in place.

Local authorities point out that responsibility for cultural heritage lies with various departments, depending on the scope of their competences. For example, the heritage protection provisions that must be observed in spatial planning are a matter for spatial planning officers, while the use of heritage in economic development comes under a different department, and education and promotion are handled by yet another office. The situation differs from municipality to municipality, depending on their chosen structure, but lack of co-operation between departments or officers is a key issue (Adamiak, Charycka 2015: 70-80). Combined with insufficient knowledge and underfunding, this results in a failure among local authorities to appreciate the importance of cultural heritage.

All in all, the biggest need is for an interdisciplinary approach in local policies. Were such an approach to be introduced, that would lead to greater understanding of the important and complex role of heritage as a force for social and economic development. The provisions of the Faro Convention reflect this interdisciplinary aspect of a sustainable approach to heritage in the life and development of society and the *Strategy 21* recommendations can be seen as a vital complement. All this tends to confirm the view that Poland’s accession to the Faro Convention would be a beneficial move.

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