
ICOMOS INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TOURISM CHARTERS 1976-2022: EVOLUTION, CONTRIBUTIONS AND TRENDS IN CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION

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ABSTRACT: Since its establishment in 1965, the standard setting texts produced by ICOMOS have become the most reputed, influential and distributed documents concerning cultural heritage protection worldwide. An examination of all ICOMOS charters and recommendations makes clear the indispensable role of this organisation in disseminating best practices in conservation, restoration and management over the last sixty years. These recommendations also show the persistence of ICOMOS in tackling the numerous pressures that challenge heritage preservation around the world. Tourism is undoubtedly one of the most important and global of these pressures due to its considerable influence at all levels of cultural heritage management and decision-making. This paper analyses the early pioneering role of ICOMOS in promoting responsible tourism. It does so through an evaluation of its international cultural tourism charters from 1976, when the first one was adopted, up to 2022, when ICOMOS has adopted the ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism: Reinforcing cultural heritage protection and community resilience through responsible and sustainable tourism management at its General Assembly in Bangkok.

The long process of drafting and approving this Charter as well as its new conceptual approaches show the emerging trends that affect cultural heritage globally and facilitate broader reflection on the future of standard setting texts in this area.

KEYWORDS: ICOMOS ICTC; cultural heritage; standard setting; responsible tourism

1. Introduction

This chapter has been prepared within the framework of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee for Theory and Philosophy of Conservation and Restoration (TheoPhilos) following the *Conference on Doctrinal texts – achievements, importance and future in the protection of heritage – 90th anniversary of the Athens Charter* held in Florence on 13-14 September 2021. The main goal of the Conference was to “to take a comprehensive look at the current situation of doctrinal documents in heritage protection and create a basis for identifying the main threats, problems and proposals for heritage solutions.”

Keeping this goal in mind, the aim of this contribution is to reflect on the evolution of ICOMOS international standard setting on cultural tourism, with the specific objectives of:

1. Disseminating the early and pioneering ICOMOS doctrine, aimed to balance cultural heritage conservation and its enjoyment in public visits and tourism.
2. Showing the importance that tourism has had in the intra-history of ICOMOS, as one of its earlier concerns and subjects of study.
3. Analysing the evolution, contributions and trends regarding heritage protection within tourism, as provided by the International ICOMOS Cultural Tourism Charters produced between 1976 and 2022.
4. Discussing the crucial yet still hardly recognised role of ICOMOS in promoting responsible tourism.

To this end, the paper starts with a brief reflection on earlier manifestations of international concern for cultural heritage, analysing the scarce but interesting references to activities related to tourism in the first standard setting meetings, delving into ICOMOS charters on cultural tourism, introducing new concepts and identifying challenges in the draft of the 2022 ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism.

2. Tourism, travel and early standard setting in cultural heritage

Tourism is one of those phenomena that unite the history of humanity, culture, science, politics, countries, and their heritage throughout history. Tourism has undoubtedly transformed our perception of the world and cultural heritage, influencing its protection. This fact, together with the evolution of tourism, its growth and problems, invites reflection on its impact on cultural sites by examining the international standard setting texts produced by ICOMOS on this subject. Although the international standard setting on cultural heritage begins with the Athens Charter 1931, first manifestations of international interest and concern for heritage sites surfaced much earlier. These first manifestations can be linked to the beginnings of international travel. In antiquity, travel not only had a religious, scientific or colonial dimension, but also sparked a genuine interest to discover, study and disseminate cultural heritage. Testimonies from Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny the Elder or Pausanias, and even the identification of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, are examples of the early influence of travel and tourism on knowledge, perception and preservation of cultural heritage (Boyer, 1997; Feifer, 1986; Hernández 2002; Patin, 1997). Exploration and pilgrimages continued during the Middle Ages and in the modern era,

gradually giving way to other forms of cultural heritage discovery. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries not only witnessed the rise of international cultural tourism, but also the creation of the first society that called for cultural heritage conservation at the international level: the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), founded in 1877 by William Morris, John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle, Edward Burne-Jones and Philip Webb, amongst others. The first aim of SPAB was to oppose stylistic restoration and instead promote maintenance and conservation. Its success reached other countries and the Society gathered international experts sharing the same concerns. Outside England, SPAB stimulated similar associations, its members corresponding with people from several other countries and receiving reports on their restoration practices. Moreover, SPAB was able to launch the first signature campaign aimed to protect monuments. The campaign was for the Basilica of San Marco in Venice, which Morris discusses in several articles and lectures. Over a thousand signatures supported the petition to the Italian Ministry of Education protesting against the intended intervention in the west front of the Basilica. The publicity of this case in England and Italy as well as “media pressure” persuaded the Italian government to change the project and adopt a more conservative approach (Jokilehto, 1999, 184-186).

This paved the way for greater awareness of international heritage, which crystallized after the devastating effects of the First World War and the establishment of the League of Nations in 1920, including the International Museums Office, founded in 1926. This organisation held the Athens Conference, whose celebrated result was the Athens Charter of 1931. It initiated international technical and moral cooperation for conservation and disseminated the criteria of Scientific Restoration. Even though its principles do not address tourism and hence fall beyond the scope of present analysis, it is noteworthy that the Conference began with a study cruise, during which participants visited several excavation sites and ancient Greek monuments, deliberating on related topics. Among other areas, the Athens Charter turned to the raising of cultural heritage awareness and education (tourism’s most positive effects), which is crucial for this chapter.

The thirty years following the Second World War were critical for the development of organisations dealing with cultural heritage, including UNESCO, which held cultural heritage conventions and established consultative bodies. The Venice Charter was born from the need to create an association of conservation and restoration specialists, independent from the already existing ICOM (International Council of Museums). The Second Congress of Architects and Specialists of Historic Buildings, held in Venice in 1964, adopted thirteen resolutions, the first one being the Venice Charter. The second was put forward by UNESCO and provided for the creation of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). Today, when cultural tourism has evolved into overtourism at many destinations, and when international organisations call for participatory governance of cultural heritage, it is vital to note that the Congress made what is probably the first European reference to community involvement and tourism as a tool of financing conservation. As Jean Duvert (1964, 2) put it,

[t]his crusade must start with local communities being entrusted with the task of bringing the people of Europe to a realisation of all of its treasures, scattered as they are throughout its nations, and belonging, as they do, in common to the people. Their preservation and usefulness must be ensured by collaboration between every local public or private

initiative, as is already happening in England and Italy. Such expense as is incurred will be at least partly covered by new streams of tourists, which will be drawn to these traces of the past, newly and intelligently brought to their notice.

Duvert identifies some of the most powerful reasons that continue to support tourism in all countries today: economic effects, the potential to finance conservation, the ability to stimulate private inversion, and the importance of local involvement in responsible promotion of cultural heritage. The following sections focus on how ICOMOS has addressed these considerations from the seventies until today.

3. ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charters of 1976 and 1999

The doctrinal aspect of ICOMOS has been particularly relevant to the raising of awareness about the need to control complex relationships between cultural heritage protection and tourism. However, ICOMOS's crucial and early role in conservation remains mostly unknown and hardly recognized, not only by partner UN organisations but also within ICOMOS itself.

ICOMOS has been involved in the pursuit of responsible, sustainable and fair tourism, beneficial to both people and cultural heritage for a long time through several activities and strategies, which include:

1. Assessing World Cultural Heritage nominations, including specific positions on the possible effects of tourism.
2. Monitoring listed properties, which includes making recommendations on the visitors' impact on conservation and communities, as well as drafting State of Conservation Reports (SOCs) when necessary.
3. Establishing leadership through participation in numerous scientific conferences, projects, debates and publications on cultural heritage and tourism.¹
4. Establishing involvement in several UN and COE global policies, strategies and projects such as climate action, Agenda 2030, and the Rights Based Approaches to cultural heritage, which are reshaping not only tourism but also heritage doctrines and organisations' priorities.
5. Fostering involvement in activities addressing tourism through the International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism (ICTC), which produced three international recommendations on this subject, the first two being the focus of this section.

The ICTC was established in the 1970s and currently has 180 members doing interdisciplinary research in more than fifty countries, whose main expertise is the relationship between tourism and heritage preservation. ICTC provides a forum for dialogue among heritage conservation and tourism professionals and academics, offering a platform for multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder research and activities with the aim of achieving high standards in policy directions and management of tourism at cultural heritage sites. Through ICTC, ICOMOS produced two international recommendations that were the first to address the inextricable, complex

¹ Among several World Heritage and UNWTO manuals on this subject the most influential and often quoted are: Feilden & Jokilehto, 1998; Pedersen, 2002; UNWTO, 2004.

and multidimensional relationships between the preservation, management, enhancement and dissemination of cultural heritage, and tourism development. In fact, the 1976 and 1999 International Cultural Tourism Charters are milestones of international doctrine in this field.

Tourism began to develop in its present form in the 1960s and 1970s, along with the democratisation of culture and travel. Parallel to what happened in the field of heritage conservation, these decades saw the consolidation of fundamental international organisations for tourism, such as the World Tourism Organisation (WTO/UNWTO). Cooperation between UNWTO and UNESCO was set up with a formal agreement of the two UN specialised agencies in 1978 (OMT, 1978). There have been no programmatic agreements between UNWTO and ICOMOS, nor between UNESCO and ICOMOS. However, ICOMOS has influenced these organizations' policies on tourism as an advisory body of the 1972 World Heritage Convention and through the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter of 1999.²

Tourism was first specifically addressed by ICOMOS at the Second General Assembly of ICOMOS (Oxford, 1969) "The Value for Tourism of the Conservation and Presentation of Monuments and Sites with Special Reference to Experience and Practice in Great Britain." This demonstrates the early concerns of the organisation for tourism and the way in which this activity was already affecting cultural heritage and the ICOMOS agenda. The report of General Assembly (only three pages long) was written by Philip Whitbourn in 1969 and is notable not only in relation to the present object of study, but also to the intra-history of ICOMOS.³ Whitbourn summarised the contributions, highlighting Max Querrien's paper (1969) "Architectural Heritage and Cultural Tourism: From the Collector of Images to the Citizen of the Cultural Universe." Querrien analysed tourist motivations of the time, interestingly realizing that touristic behaviour has hardly changed in the previous fifty years. In his view, its motivations ranged "from the most admirable cultural ones stemming from a desire to ask questions of the stones and to find in them language, a purpose and an intellectual and spiritual image," to the "monument hunter, who gave the impression of wanting to catch the buildings with a lasso and add them to his collection of hunting trophies" (Whitbourn, 1969, 12).

Probably basing on this suggestive precedent, the Cultural Tourism Charter of 1976 was the first international recommendation specifically dealing with tourism and cultural heritage. This Charter is indeed one of the first ICOMOS doctrinal texts, whose analysis is therefore essential. It was adopted following the International Seminar on Contemporary Tourism and Humanism held in Brussels on 8-9 November 1976. This document not only anticipated the need for responsible tourist use of cultural heritage, but also the recognition of sites and monuments as a source of economic benefit and cultural education – the two aspects of tourism that have positive and negative effects and thus need to be continuously monitored and balanced.

2 Pedersen, among others, stressed the importance of the 1999 Charter for World Heritage Sites by including it as Appendix 2 in *Managing Tourism at World Heritage Sites: a Practical Manual for World Heritage Site Managers*, which argues that "[a]long with other UNESCO units, the Centre supports the ICOMOS Charter for Sustainable Cultural Tourism. These guidelines include a complete outline of cultural tourism policies that can aid policy development" (Pedersen, 2002, 17).

3 The report also defines the professional profile of the Director of the International Secretariat and the possible location of its first headquarters in the Marais, Paris.

With this dual approach, the 1976 Charter was an early precedent of raising awareness about tourism's future growth and influence on heritage sites, arguing that “[t]ourism is an irreversible social, human, economic and cultural fact. Its influence in the sphere of monuments and sites is particularly important and can but increase because of the known conditions of that activity's development” (Position 1).

Considering that this was drafted in the 1970s, when cultural tourism was only emerging, this Charter was ahead of its time. A pioneering document regarding multifaceted ethical and economical aspects of tourism, it states that “the respect of the world, cultural and natural heritage must take precedence over any other considerations, however justified these may be from a social, political or economic point of view” (Position 4).

To gain that respect, the Charter advocated for the education of tourists and young people about the value of monuments, encouraging the training of those responsible for developing and implementing tourist use of heritage sites.

Apart from the above crucial statements, the Charter's most remarkable outcome was the broad consensus behind the document, which was signed by many institutions. It was the first known effort to gather the tourism industry and main international organisations dealing with heritage protection.⁴ For these reasons it can be affirmed that the 1976 ICOMOS Cultural Tourism Charter was the founding document containing international regulations on tourism and cultural heritage, since it addresses all elements and problems of this interrelationship, proposing necessary measures to reconcile tourism with the protection and dissemination of heritage, identifying the impact of tourism on cultural heritage, and fostering respect for it “above any other consideration” (Article 4.1). It also touches on other crucial issues such as the role of education and awareness, the media, and tourism infrastructures. These topics were developed by ICOMOS and other organisations in their subsequent recommendations on tourism. Moreover, this Charter was the main reference for all subsequent standard-setting documents in this field, which is important since none of these organisations had issued any recommendations on this subject.

For example, the first crucial recommendation made by UNWTO on this subject was the Manila Declaration on World Tourism, which was the result of the World Tourism Conference held in the capital of the Philippines in 1980. The Manila Declaration was also a pioneering document, equivalent to the ICOMOS Cultural Tourism Charter of 1976, which could have inspired it. Likewise, it develops the notion of carrying capacity, the quality of tourism activity in general, its educational and environmental value, and tourism planning as the main conditions for its appropriate development. As for UNESCO, its doctrinal evolution on this matter ranges from a surprising lack of concern for tourism in the early Convention documents, to an alliance with UNWTO when tourism showed adverse effects on cultural and natural heritage. The Final Report of the Meeting on the Preservation and Utilization of Monuments and Sites of Artistic and Historical Value held in Quito, Ecuador in 1967 (UNESCO & PNUD, 1967) includes the

4 These include ICOMOS itself, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Union of Architects (UIA), Europa Nostra, the European Travel Commission (ETC), l'Académie International du Tourisme (ACIT), l'Alliance International du Tourisme (AIT), l'Association Internationale d'Experts Scientifiques du Tourisme, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO, at that time) and many others.

earliest indirect references to tourism.⁵ They are notable with regard to the economic value of monuments, their ability to educate the masses and the need to extend the visitors' positive economic effects to the surroundings of heritage sites while preventing their commercialization and gentrification. However, the text of the World Heritage Convention only mentions tourism once: in Article 11.4, which deals with the List of World Heritage in Danger, considering the possible negative effects of tourism only from the perspective of tourist development projects and as an emerging issue that is difficult to predict or avoid, as if it were a natural disaster:

The list may include only such property forming part of the cultural and natural heritage as is threatened by serious and specific dangers, such as the threat of disappearance caused by accelerated deterioration, large-scale public or private projects or rapid urban or tourist development projects; destruction caused by changes in the use or ownership of the land; major alterations due to unknown causes; abandonment for any reason whatsoever; the outbreak or the threat of an armed conflict; calamities and cataclysms; serious fires, earthquakes, landslides; volcanic eruptions; changes in water level, floods and tidal waves. (UNESCO, 1972)⁶

The comparison of the first documents of these organisations makes it clear that ICOMOS's early contribution to heritage conservation within tourism through its pioneering 1976 Cultural Tourism Charter deserves wider recognition. Although the statements of this Charter constituted the basis for all subsequent positions on cultural heritage and tourism, as well as for regulations formulated by UNWTO and UNESCO, today it is difficult to find documents that defend heritage in such forceful manner. Most of them lose impetus when faced with the need to satisfy multiple actors, which often proves impossible. In fact, until recently ICOMOS's strong stance on the limits of tourism has not resulted in the adoption of regulatory measures on visitor flows to cultural sites, including ones listed as World Heritage.

For these reasons, after several debates on the implementation of the 1976 Charter, the ICTC began to develop a new doctrinal document on tourism in the 1990s, specifically following the ICOMOS 11th General Assembly "Heritage and Social Changes" held in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1996 (James & Barrister, 1993). It produced the ICOMOS "International Cultural Tourism Charter – Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance" (1999), which was adopted by the 12th

5 Section 6.3 quotes the importance of "incorporating an economic potential, a current value, of making an unexploited resource productive by a process of revaluation that, far from lessening its strictly historic or artistic significance, enhances and raises it from the exclusive domain of erudite minorities to the awareness and enjoyment of the masses." Section 6.7 stresses that "insofar as a monument attracts visitors, so will there be more merchants interested in installing appropriate establishments under its protective shadow. This is another predictable result of enhancement and implies the adoption of regulatory measures which, while facilitating and encouraging private initiative, prevent commercialization of the site and loss of its original purpose" (UNESCO & PNUD, 1967).

6 While it is understandable that the World Heritage Convention text does not fully account for the impact of tourism on heritage (which was only emerging in 1972), it is surprising that the Operational Guidelines, which update the heritage doctrine, would not extensively deal with this topic until 2010, when the effects of unmanaged tourism on some of these sites was already evident, often dramatically. Crucial references to this topic in Operational Guidelines are now found in Sections 4 and 5 as well as in Annex 7.

General Assembly in Mexico City in the same year. This Charter remains an essential document highlighting the potential of tourism as a form of intercultural collaboration and exchange, demanding tourism's cooperation in the protection of heritage, emphasising the quality of visitor experience as a key awareness-raising tool, and underlining the dynamic dimension of the relationship between tourism and heritage. However, the most important of these contributions could be the Charter's holistic vision of diverse "sustainability" aspects and its relationship with the heritage sites' limits of acceptable change and carrying capacity:

Before heritage places are promoted or developed for increased tourism, management plans should assess the natural and cultural values of the resource. They should then establish appropriate limits of acceptable change, particularly in relation to the impact of visitor numbers on the physical characteristics, integrity, ecology and biodiversity of the place, local access and transportation systems and the social, economic and cultural well being of the host community. If the likely level of change is unacceptable the development proposal should be modified. (Principle 2.6)

There should be on-going programmes of evaluation to assess the progressive impacts of tourism activities and development on the particular place or community. (Principle 2.7)

Along these crucial statements, the Charter anticipated the community-focused approach, which had not been carefully regarded until then and has still not been fully implemented:

The rights and interests of the host community [...] should be respected. They should be involved in establishing goals, strategies, policies and protocols for the identification, conservation, management, presentation and interpretation of their heritage resources, cultural practices and contemporary cultural expressions, in the tourism context. (Principle 4.1)

The 1999 Charter was also pioneering in delving into a topic hitherto little explored in existing international standards: the visitor experience. As García Hernández and de la Calle Vaquero stress (2012, 257-259), this aspect had not yet been considered as important for cultural heritage sustainability and carrying capacity. The 1999 Charter addresses this in the following passages:

Excessive or poorly-managed tourism and tourism related development can threaten their physical nature, integrity and significant characteristics. The ecological setting, culture and lifestyles of host communities may also be degraded, along with the visitor's experience of the place. (Preamble)

Conservation and Tourism Planning for Heritage Places should ensure that the Visitor Experience will be worthwhile, satisfying and enjoyable. (Principle 3)

Places and collections of heritage significance should be promoted and managed in ways which protect their authenticity and enhance the visitor experience by minimising fluctuations in arrivals and avoiding excessive numbers of visitors at any one time. (Principle 6.2)

Attention to visitors is also included in the principles of the 1999 Charter concerning the communication, presentation and interpretation of heritage, which remain perfectly valid and were the only ones endorsed by ICOMOS until the adoption of the 2008 ICOMOS Charter on the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites.

Finally, another novel aspect of the 1999 Charter was to raise awareness about the effects of globalisation on heritage, and about the need to protect cultural diversity and local identity, long

before the existence of the UNESCO convention on this subject. The Charter made an effort to demonstrate not only how tourism can empower communities to defend their values, but also how it can be a threat when left unplanned and unmanaged. Accordingly, this document was the first to link three areas where cooperation is fundamental from the perspective of today's standards – heritage conservation, cultural diversity and tourism – providing ICOMOS and host communities with a tool to address the impacts of globalisation on local cultures.

4. After 1999: the draft of the 2022 ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism

Despite the relevance of the 1976 and 1999 Charters and their principles, over the last twenty years there have been too many contradictions regarding the links between heritage conservation, the well-being of communities, and tourism's role in sustainable development. Although visitors contribute to heritage maintenance, the increase in mass cultural tourism has changed the enjoyment of heritage by turning it into consumption of “must see” sites, thus having negative yet preventable impact on heritage. This necessitates that tourism be assessed and monitored as it has impoverished host communities' quality of life and identification with heritage. It has also favoured heritage's economic dimension, diminishing its ability to fulfil the intangible needs of beauty, harmony and culture, which can be only satisfied when cultural sites are visited under appropriate conditions. In addition, since 1999 tourist arrivals have increased exponentially, while heritage and sustainability concepts have been extended, citizen and communities demands on heritage have constantly grown, and the global climate crisis has dramatically compromised our future. Addressing these issues requires specific and coordinated international action as well as new tools and strategies.

The need to tackle these challenges prompted the ICTC decision to update the 1999 Charter at its Annual Meeting in Florence in 2017. This decision was formalised through the Florence Declaration on Cultural Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Tourism for Development, adopted by ICOMOS at its 19th General Assembly in Delhi as Resolution 19GA 2017/20.⁷

The process started as a review of the 1999 Charter. However, responding and adapting to the evolution of tourism as well as the profound disruptions caused by Covid-19, a new Charter began to be drafted: “the ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism: Reinforcing cultural heritage protection and community resilience through responsible and sustainable tourism management.”⁸ On 27 October and 3 November 2021, the ICOMOS Scientific Council and Advisory Committee approved the Charter's final draft, which has been adopted at the ICOMOS General Assembly in Bangkok in 2022. The Charter aims to be universally applicable, taking into account existing and future regional guidelines and ensuring language inclusivity. It is therefore

7 The resolution invites “ICOMOS and other international bodies concerned with setting standards for heritage conservation, to formulate an agenda to provide a framework document to address pertinent issues and provide guidance on Cultural Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Tourism for Development” (ICOMOS, 2017).

8 The ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism 2022 has been drafted by the ICOMOS International Committee on Cultural Tourism, whose task force includes the following members: Celia Martínez Yáñez (Coordinator), Fergus Maclaren (President), Cecilie Smith-Christensen, Margaret Gowen, Jim Donovan, Ian Kelly, Sue Millar, Sofia Fonseca, Tomeu Deyá, Ananya Bhattacharya, and Carlos Alberto Hiriart.

available in English, French, Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, Italian and Danish, while translations into other languages are being prepared (ICOMOS 2021).

The International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism 2022 dovetails with the new policy directions of ICOMOS and covers several global issues affecting cultural heritage, people and communities, the tourism sector and destinations, and the environment, adopting an ethical and rights-based approach as well as proposing crucial principles through which cultural tourism can support the protection of cultural heritage. The principles outlined in the Charter set priorities in the protection of cultural heritage by addressing tourism management plans, monitoring and carrying capacity; communities' resilience, responsible and participatory governance; cultural tourism's ability to contribute to UN Sustainable Development Goals; and the challenging relationships between tourism and climate action.

The Covid-19 pandemic started a new era and led to the concern for a regenerative and responsible tourism able to support Agenda 2030. Nevertheless, these expectations proved rather naive. Mass tourism and mass visitation to the always-crowded cultural heritage sites is emerging with the restored freedom to travel and enjoy heritage values. Although this desire is positive, the negative consequences of mass tourism or overtourism will not cease unless international organisations are vigilant and provide clear and practical guidelines on responsible, regenerative and transformational cultural heritage tourism. Hence, standing against economic exploitation of cultural sites, the Charter claims for their consideration as common resources that deserve to be responsibly enjoyed and shared through participatory governance as well as people-centred and place-based approaches. The Charter focuses on tourism as a vehicle of joy, emotion and community resilience instead of considering it from a purely economic perspective. Beyond the 1999 pioneering focus on community involvement, the 2022 Charter calls for the reinforcement of rights and participatory governance. It also goes beyond tourism sustainability, turning to responsible management and promotion, tourism's potential to contribute to the SDGs, and the need to mitigate its effects on climate change. The Charter therefore targets all stakeholders in cultural heritage tourism, emphasizing that "responsible management of tourism is a shared responsibility of governments, tour operators, tourism businesses, destination managers and marketing organisations, site management authorities, land-use planners, heritage and tourism professionals, civil society and visitors" (Preamble).

The International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism 2022 is probably the first ICOMOS recommendation that deals with these subjects in a holistic way in a single document and could therefore become an important reference. However, putting these new concepts into practice faces several new challenges related not only to tourism but also to cultural heritage theory, protection and management. The first of these challenges concerns heritage "as a common resource, understanding that the governance and enjoyment of these commons are shared rights and responsibilities" (Preamble). Consequently, it becomes crucial to activate the democratic mechanisms intended to involve citizens in public policy-making processes. Participatory governance of cultural heritage requires bringing all groups into the decision-making processes regarding cultural tourism, including experts, professionals, host communities, visitors and a wide range of local, economic and political actors, whose interests are often diverse and contradictory. Therefore, there is urgent need to reinforce capacity building in cultural heritage and responsible tourism among all these

communities and actors to ensure that participatory governance in this domain is real, fair, balanced as well as able to foster and protect heritage preservation. This poses several crucial questions. How can ICOMOS contribute to capacity building to enhance cultural heritage preservation and its shared and responsible enjoyment while increasing communities' resilience and awareness? Are ICOMOS members sufficiently trained to facilitate participatory governance? Is the current shift of the organisation toward participatory governance and Agenda 2030 paying sufficient attention to its mandate to defend cultural heritage values and their preservation? Answering these questions is key for the future of ICOMOS and for the future of cultural heritage standard setting, not only from a conceptual perspective, but also considering the unexpected consequences that climate emergency, disasters, and other global issues such as overtourism or tourism disruption can have on cultural heritage and communities if they are not sufficiently prepared and empowered to address them.

5. Conclusions

The influence of ICOMOS standard setting texts dealing with tourism is uneven. Although the 1976 and 1999 Charters are well known and often cited by academics and UN agencies, their ability to avoid mass tourism and the degradation of heritage sites has been limited by the difficulty to persuade the tourism industry and investors to respect the carrying capacity, integrity and sense of place of heritage sites.

Considering the difficulty to implement these charters, the question emerges why continue producing and reviewing standard setting texts in the twenty-first century. In my opinion, although charters, guidelines and recommendations made by ICOMOS and other organisations are neither sacred nor obligatory, many of them have had an extraordinarily positive influence on conservation and heritage theory, which needs to be cultivated, enriched and updated in the future. Conservation and restoration criteria as well as new heritage types and concepts described in international standard setting texts have been included in national heritage regulations worldwide. This has upgraded their principles into mandatory guidelines, providing these charters with a practical relevance that all recommendations strive to achieve but rarely do.⁹

In the specific case of ICOMOS charters on cultural tourism, their relevance and necessity is now greater than ever. The collapse of tourism due to the Covid-19 pandemic has caused large losses in employment and economic gains, making the sector eager to recover visitors (and their money) at any cost. To confront this scenario and its likely negative effects on cultural heritage, it is vital to recall the 1976, 1999 and 2022 cultural tourism charters. Still, international recommendations will certainly not suffice to confront this complex situation. Thus, we need to provide strong reasons for responsible and regenerative tourism, firstly by identifying its conditions and principles, secondly by enhancing capacity building in cultural heritage and responsible tourism, and thirdly by guiding, supporting and encouraging inclusive and ethical approaches to cultural heritage tourism. This is

9 This is, for example, the case in Spain, whose Law on National Artistic Heritage of 1933 was clearly influenced by the Athens Charter of 1931. The Law on Spanish Historic Heritage of 1985 and the seventeenth regional Cultural Heritage Laws also build upon the Athens Charter, the Venice Charter and the types of heritage properties outlined in the 1972 and 2003 UNESCO Conventions and their Operational Guidelines (Martínez Yáñez, 2006).

also crucial given that, as the ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism 2022 shows, some global policies such as Agenda 2030 and Climate Action – whose focus is not primarily on cultural heritage and its preservation – are deeply influencing heritage doctrine, management and protection. The same goes for the emerging rights-based and people-centred approaches to cultural heritage as well as claims to participatory and polycentric governance. They all can be very positive when based on widespread awareness and capacity building among all communities and stakeholders involved in cultural heritage.

I hope that the ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism 2022 will stimulate our organisation's reflection on these subjects, which shall undoubtedly shape cultural heritage and life on the planet in the future.

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