



**Transnational Cooperation
to rescue and to develop the
European Cultural Heritage - Fortresses**

“Declaration of Kaunas”

22.03.2007

Declaration of the participants of the Scientific Conference
“Research, protection, reconstruction and rehabilitation of fortresses“
on March 21 to 23, 2007
in Kaunas / Lithuania

Based on the EU funding project
“Baltic Culture and Tourism Route Fortresses”

I Fortresses as an important part of Cultural Heritage, European History and European Future

Fortresses belong to the European cultural heritage.

Fortresses have a significant impact on the urban and economic development in Europe. They form the historic structures of many towns and city centres. Fortresses in Europe present a worldwide unique military architecture - a part of our common cultural heritage.

Some of them like the fortresses in Amsterdam, Karlskrona, Suomenlinna, Kronshtadt / St. Petersburg and Toruń belong to the World Cultural Heritage (UNESCO).

The fortresses are witnesses of the political, military, economic, social, artistic and urban processes.

At present some fortresses in Europe have developed as cultural and tourist centres, like Citadel Spandau / Germany, fortress Suomenlinna / Finland, fortress Naarden / The Netherlands or Citadel Vauban in Besançon / France.

Understanding and knowledge of fortifications and their political and military background is a peace project. Former enemies can be mutual tourism and cultural exchange become directly aware of the lunacy of war and terror. The fortifications are a common reminder for peace. This enlightenment has to be constantly maintained though. The fortresses must be preserved as “monumentums” of this process.

II Cultural Heritage Fortresses are in need of protection and transformation

Due to military usage and the Cold War fortresses in Central, South and Eastern Europe - particularly in former Prussia - are endangered to fall into decay.

Fortress Kuestrin located at the German-Polish border-region is an example for this process. The attractive old part of the town was completely destroyed in 1945 and until now there is no concept how to deal with the ruins. In Kaliningrad the military left partly damaged fortresses. In Kaunas the military left one of the biggest major-fortresses of Europe, a potential world-culture-heritage, in a terrible condition.

Many local authorities are not able to solve the problems by themselves anymore.

Compared to their historical significance a lot of fortresses in Europe have been profoundly damaged by military.

Communities have an enormous demand on the inventory, the reconstruction, the monument protection, the cultural and tourism utilization, the transnational cooperation, and the transfer of scientific knowledge, the models and innovative methods for a fortress development that is linked to economic effects.

Methods for the inventory, documentation, restauration, monument protection, development of different utilizations, local management organisations and interregional marketing are required. Development of fortresses for a civil usage is a complex task that needs experts and scientific support, specific restauration technologies, monument protection and monument-retentive utilizations.

Fortresses need new sources of income and new jobs in fortress regions that support the European integration.

With the end of completion of its military usage the monument protection of fortresses, especially in Eastern Europe, need to be guaranteed. Otherwise these constructions will disappear. They form the cities and landscapes. Today they establish big challenges for

the urban planning, the monument and nature protection due to its highly specified construction.

Fortifications and fortresses in the European neighbourhood Russia, Belarus and Ukraine belong to the European Heritage as well.

All participants of the conference regret the current development and the difficult situation of the monuments.

Due to the political and social changes in the past several monuments were endangered and still will be in the future.

III European Cooperation to rescue and to develop the Cultural Heritage Fortresses

The transnational cooperation shall be directed into transformation of fortresses into peaceful usages including economic, tourist and cultural targets. Therefore a **European Initiative** is needed.

General Objectives

The intention of the local authorities is a transnational political, economic and scientific cooperation directed into transformation and inclusion of historical fortresses into the modern European society with the following aims:

- Monument protection and rescue of the military architecture
- Transformation of military architecture objects and complexes to modern utilization complying monument protection
- Development of fortresses into attractive centres of culture, art, leisure, tourism and nature
- The inclusion of historical fortresses in the social and economic development of regions.
- Be better known as a part of our history.

Scientific Contributions to the objectives

Europe needs a transnational innovative cooperation between “fortress communities” (“Fort-Pool”) and different scientific institutes / universities (“Brain-Pool”), because several scientific institutions deal with this task only on a national, but not on an international level.

Fortresses need exceptional scientific competence and consultations because of missing information in general.

With transnational networking between fortress communities, scientific know-how and tourism industry fortresses can develop attractive utilization concepts that have social and economic impact on the regions.

The common Europe makes possible an European wide transformation of performances and knowledge. Fortresses need a **common European action framework** for a scientific monitoring of European Fortresses.

Contribution of Baltic Fort Route project to the transnational scientific cooperation

The project "Baltic Culture and Tourism Route Fortresses" (BFR) promotes and develops the transformation of former military used, historically significant fortifications. Therefore, partners from different countries, former fortress towns and scientific institutes came voluntarily together. European cooperation is necessary to organise high level scientific research process creating network of scientists, cooperation between researchers and archives, to research systems of fortresses (former Russian or former German) and different fortresses themselves. By presenting models, the BFR project has laid the foundation for a structured scientific cooperation for the inventory, redevelopment and monument-retentive utilization and cultural-tourist Fortress development in Central / Eastern Europe.

It connects the scientific work of the universities, organizes a consultation infrastructure with the scientific centres and develops the information and communication instruments, which could be used by the Fortresses in the future.

The first scientific consultation centre should be established for a know-how transfer. Best practices in utilization of monuments will be collected and published. Fortress development and network will strengthen the balance between regions, particularly between Western Europe and Eastern / South Eastern Europe.

The improved inventory and documentation, the restoration strategies, the monument-protection and the nature management, they are all linked to prepare the tourist usage. Long-term systematic fortress redevelopment becomes possible.

The organisations of utilization and management of high quality tourism offer to support the development of fortresses to be attractive, professionally managed cultural and tourist centres.

Because of this scientific cooperation abroad a new performance potential of science has arisen to maintain the cultural heritage in Europe.

This way needs to be continued consequently.

Projects like the Baltic Culture and Tourism Route Fortresses should be enlarged through whole Europe. This project should be the foundation for an organized European movement of transnational cooperation. System of fortresses can serve as cultural-tourism route.

This way of cross border development should resolve the negative effects of the military expansion and the Cold War in Europe to rescue the historical heritage of fortresses in the Baltic Sea Region.

The participants and organizers of the conference propose the European Union and the European Council to take the until now neglected cultural heritage "Fortresses" more into their consideration.

National governments should encourage and support town councils and local organizations in their efforts of scientific research, maintenance and restoration of historic fortifications, and of the translation of all the results of their investigations in English language.

On this occasion the appeal addresses the national scientific institutions and universities at the same occasion to start an intensive cooperation, the transfer of knowledge, and the programmes of research, which in sum support the maintenance of the common cultural heritage fortresses.

Discussed, voted and accepted by the overwhelming majority of conference participants. Kaunas, 22nd March 2007