

The 7 Most Endangered 2014

Project Fact Sheet

<u>Project Title</u>	Neighbourhoods of Dolcho and Apozari, Kastoria, GREECE
<u>Location</u>	Kastoria, Greece
<u>Initial input date</u>	November 2013
<u>Current status</u>	Post appraisal follow-up
<u>Latest input date</u>	02.10.2018

Summary, status, prognosis

Nominated Site of Dolcho and Apozari, historic neighborhoods which comprises building clusters of secular, religious (Byzantine) and museum interest, of high architectural and aesthetic value, heritage monument of historic and archaeological importance. Frameworks and the National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013), having already implemented important projects of restoration and re-use of several buildings and their surrounding land.

Some slow progress on preventive actions. Further activity hoped for but uncertain, very dependent on the regional government and municipality situation. www.kastoriacity.gr

Classification: Initially good progress. No news about present times.

Basic data

Nominator:

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Function President of Elliniki Etairia

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Brief description:

Historic neighborhoods with relevant examples of residential small buildings growing around small byzantine chapels and churches.

Landscape and surrounding area with high heritage value.

Owner:

Public. (&Private), Bishopric (churches). **2013 data:** Name: Municipality of Kastoria

Administrator: (2013 data).

The Municipality of Kastoria, with its own funds and resources and with European funds.

Other partners:

- The Regional Authority of Western Macedonia.

Website: www.pdm.gov.gr

- The 16th EBA (Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities).
- The Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE).
- The Department of Modern Monuments and Technical Works of Western Macedonia.

Context, description

Kastoria is a town of 17,000 inhabitants, close to the northwest frontier of Greece. Lying between mountain masses, 620m above sea-level, it occupies an isthmus surrounded on three sides by the waters of Lake Kastoria or Orestiada. The lake, which constitutes an important local ecosystem, has been declared a protected area of particular natural beauty by the Ministry for the Environment and is a member of the Natura 2000 network. Dolcho and Apozari neighborhoods are located at the east end of the city. The narrowest side of the isthmus conserves remains of the Justinian Walls (VIth C.). Human settlements in the area are much older, in the southern shore of the lake remains the Neolithic village of Dispilio, one of the most important in Europe. According to reports, both neighborhoods were historically occupied by a population of Byzantine Christian religion, as evidenced by the large number of small churches that are conserved in both districts (31-32 in total), so that the buildings are organized around these buildings forming small urban complexes, with a parish structure. These churches are built with brick walls and masonry covered by vaults, and curved tiles. Some churches remain wall paintings of extraordinary value inside. This interconnected nexus of churches and private houses constitutes a rare example of a Byzantine and post-Byzantine township, and remains inhabited to this day. Some buildings linked to the fur industry (the name of Kastoria appears to come from the European beaver, now disappeared) remain in both neighborhoods. All of the above constitute a cohesive and harmonious civic inheritance, the 'traditional heart of the town'.

Issues, problems, threats

- High unemployment rates.
- Complex and difficult processing documents and bureaucratic slowness; major management issues are centralized in Athens and other administrative centres.
- Administrative complexity and difficulty in processing and obtaining the necessary permits. That means that the average time for getting permission for the restoration of listed building may take from 4 -7months to a year; introduction of a new tax on real property, (although it is common in other European countries), coupled with the rising costs of fuel for heating.
- Ruined buildings and decrepit infrastructure.
- Loss of building types from disuse and neglect, leading to its collapse and disappearance.
- Gradual abandonment of traditional buildings by owners, aggravated by the aging population and the lack of resources to maintain their services and to prevent deterioration.
- Precarious security for pedestrians, buildings about to collapse.
- Vandalism
- Insecurity
- Absence of measures to encourage rehabilitation and consistent and respectful reuse of buildings by local, regional or central authorities. Lack of attention to historic buildings by the locals because of the difficulty of handling, high costs and adaptation to standards of quality and comfort of the rehabilitation.
- Urban lightning outdated and expensive. High energy and maintenance costs.
- Old and harmful interior lightning of the churches. High levels of IR and UV radiation.
- Absence of bank credit, poor private and public initiative.

Status pre-mission

Recent years have seen the opening of restaurants and boutique hotels, all tastefully appointed, most of them housed in restored listed buildings. At the same time, both of these quarters, as well as the entire city of Kastoria, continue to be linked with the lake and the picturesque landscape. However, the greatest damage to the weight-carrying structures of these buildings is caused by the influx (seeping) of rain-water through non-conserved roofs, leading to the gradual disintegration of the wooden parts (beams) of the roof infrastructure and thus to the eventual collapse of the building. The current financial crisis has made things considerably worse since 2008. And most of the residential buildings are empty, in abandon and neglect.

Summary EN/EIBI mission recommendations, action programme

The Feasibility Study (April 2015), was funded by a grant from the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), through its Spanish Social Cohesion Account.

Ability to create an action plan and a strategy that includes the renewal of both districts with the development and strengthening of economic activity. This strategy should include:

- Recovery of historic districts, with the enhancement of a unique urban pattern of high value.
- Reactivation of local economy.
- Existence in both quarters empty buildings and public property in partial or total disuse, but with a high architectural value. This makes it possible that public initiative can serve as an example and reference to subsequent interventions private owners.
- Use these buildings, once restored, as "generators of activity", intensifying their use and providing them with a "living" and dynamic content.
- Foster cooperation with the private owners of low economic level, based on different forms of management: sale or assignment of use, total or partial lease medium or long term of its buildings, for residential crafts and commercial uses.
- Enhancing the opportunity to use the buildings recovered as cultural spaces "live" and accommodation for students and pupils of schools of the city (middle and upper level schools, universities).
- Creation of employment associated with cultural heritage, tourism, restoration of listed buildings or arts and crafts, by promoting the use of new technologies in both neighbourhoods.
- Linking spaces recovered in both neighbourhoods with social and cultural activities that can generate an economic return thanks to the tourism development of the attractive surroundings. (the lake, environmental, archaeological and religious heritage ...)
- Tourism development, taking advantage of its cultural and natural uniqueness.

Progress on recommendations and latest status

The Feasibility study, its conclusions and recommendations were generally well received by those involved, notably the Nominator (Mr. Carras), the Mayor, the bishop and the responsible of the Ministries involved. Afterwards (May 16th 2015), a meeting-conference was celebrated in Kastoria for the implementation of the process, with other similar cases.

Practical action has inevitably been constrained by the economical-political situation and changing context in Greece. Consequently, the various public and private agents must come together as partners in a joint-management project aimed at:

- Revitalizing the Dolcho and Apozari neighborhoods (in a first step across the pilot areas selected), through conservation, restoration revitalization and enhancement efforts.
- Managing and enhancing the cultural heritage of this municipality and of the nation as a whole through socio-economic-religious development initiatives.
- In a first step the proposed area will be about 281.000m²; 161,000m² correspond to Dolchio and 120.000m² to Apozari. But the Feasibility Study proposes a most coherent intervention (about the 10%), based in two pilot areas one by each neighborhood, properly selected and well defined.
- 29 buildings would be repaired and enhanced, together with churches and surrounding areas. The cost of the intervention on the Dolcho and Apozari Pilot Areas, The intervention quantification areas with a budget of 5.271.338€ in Dolcho and 4.926.301€ in Apozari, will result in the enhancement of a significant historic areas in the history of Kastoria and continental Greek region.
- Nowadays, it seems that the search for funding has been unsuccessful but potential sources still possible.

Impact of EIBI/CEB/EN intervention

Nominator's Comments:

Because of the political situation the sought protection of the cultural heritage in the amphitheatre and surrounding area has not been achieved. The project was conceived to be carried out in phases over a four-year with the formulation of planning provisions in the area for the enhancement of the historic core. This larger area is precisely nominated as 'The Zone A' that means very rich in archaeology and is under the protection of the Ministry of Culture.

Europa Nostra and the EN/EIBI/CEB could assist with the provision of funds from European or international sources that have been identified. This will facilitate the support, and in some cases the restoration, and close valuable traditional urban and historic elements (medieval and Roman walls, , market, civil buildings).

Appraisal Team's Comments:

- A sustainable project could potentially create positive impacts with the revitalization of life and activities on the historic centre of Kastoria.
- In addition the implementation of the foreseen project should contribute to confidence building between the authorities and the Kastorian citizens and religious community (bishopric), by confirming the importance of preserving the monuments and civil buildings and the spirit of the city's historic central area. It may take some time to advance and be difficult, despite the enthusiasm of some persons and entities involved.

Lessons learned:

- When historic buildings are rehabilitated, the project can be used to train and qualify young people interested in renovation techniques: thus obtaining qualified workers for the future rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- The involvement of different stakeholders (bishopric, other governmental bodies at different levels, private foundations), into the integrated approach allows for the chance to foster their awareness about both cultural heritage demands and development potentials in their respective fields and how to take them into consideration for future activities (how different departments think and make use of cultural heritage).
- Last but not least, the integrated approach helps the people in charge of safeguarding and developing a cultural heritage site to coordinate their work with the work of other stakeholders. However this was considered a worthy but ambitious initiative needing a long term approach and patience.

Data on inputs & timing	Dates, Participants
Nomination form submitted	November 1th, 2013
Project selected as 7 ME:	June 2013
Guidelines Draft consultancy contract from CEB	October 2014
Response to questionnaire	April 2015 – Final Report-Feasibility Study.
Appraisal mission	8-9-10 October 2013; 13-14-15 November 2013
Participants:- EN	Mr. Costa Carras, Vice President Europa Nostra , Mrs. Ioanna Steriotou, Europa Nostra SC. Mr. Stefan Bâlici, EN Council member. Mr. Pedro Ponce de Leon ENSC member.
CEB Institute	Mr. Urbano Murillo
Feedback letter post mission	11 September 2013
Response to further questions	10 October 2013
Technical report issued	April 2015
Request for progress report	1) 29 April 2014: 2)April 2017
Response on progress	1) 29 May 2014: 2) June 2017
Follow-up visits	<u>October, 3th-5th – November, 4th-8th) 2014</u>
Participants: EN	Mr. Costa Carras, Vice President Europa Nostra , Mrs. Ioanna Steriotou, Europa Nostra SC. Mr. Pedro Ponce de Leon ENSC member.
CEB Institute	Mr. Urbano Murillo
Report on follow-up visit	December 2013
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