

Baukultur – Austria's calling card

From monument protection via UNESCO
World Heritage sites towards *Baukultur*

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Starting point

As law-maker and subsidy provider, the State bears responsibility for the cultural quality of our landscapes, cities, villages and buildings; in this regard, it acts as a role model. This applies to all local authorities. Responsible handling of taxpayers' money also includes the commitment to quality in terms of *Baukultur*. An advanced *Baukultur* helps to reduce costs through intelligent planning and offers all citizens a better quality of life.

In this domain, the federal government has a wide range of levers at its disposal. Thanks to the *Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture*, the federal government is equipped with a strategic framework comprising six fields of action; this constitutes both a voluntary self-commitment in the public interest to its own sphere of activity and the basis for a partnership approach involving all groups of actors. The *Third Austrian Building Culture Report* supplements this approach; on the basis of various scenarios extending up to 2050, it points out strategies that will, in the future, make Austria worth living in, and formulates five strategic guiding principles for this purpose.¹

Within the sphere of influence of the federal state, monument protection takes on a particular importance because according to Art. 10 para. 1 No. 13 B-VG it is a federal matter in Austria in terms of legislation and enforcement and, according to Art. 102 para. 2 B-VG is implemented directly by the federal administration.² In 2014,

when tasks related to the arts and culture were moved out of the education unit of the Federal Chancellery, the *Baukultur* issue was transferred from the regional planning and regional policy division of the coordination section to the monument protection and UNESCO World Heritage division of the cultural section. However, the beginnings of the connection between monument protection matters and UNESCO World Heritage sites, on the one hand, and *Baukultur* on the other hand, go back to a 2004 National Council study on the subject of architecture and *Baukultur* in Austria, in which the then-coordinator for UNESCO World Heritage took part as a representative of the monument protection division. In 2008, when the Advisory Council for *Baukultur* was set up at the Federal Chancellery, the opportunity arose to institutionalise this objective connection. Taking note of the opinion of the monument protection division of the education unit, the Federal Chancellery included the Federal Monuments Authority Austria as a member in the ordinance on the establishment of the Advisory Council for *Baukultur* and the measure "Promoting the compatibility of the built cultural heritage with contemporary architecture and *Baukultur*"³ Since 2015, the deputy head of the monument protection division and UNESCO World Heritage coordinator has acted as the deputy chairwoman of the Advisory Council for *Baukultur*.⁴

In the adjacent policy area of monument protection and UNESCO World Heritage itself, numerous steps

towards reform were taken from 2009 onwards, where the approach was guided by the integrated method that is characteristic of *Baukultur*. The basic principles of good governance were anchored in an overall plan for the strategic further development of monument protection in Austria, *BDA 2013* and, in accordance with the approach mentioned, several relevant thematic fields, such as statutory protection, monument preservation, information technology, legal framework conditions, and financial framework were dealt with.

The monument protection impact cycle – first developed in 2011 as the basis for budgetary agreements between the ministry and the Federal Monuments Authority Austria in preparation for the introduction of impact-oriented public management – displays the most important interrelationships (see Fig. 1): thanks to high regard for monuments, the need for protection and care become understandable; as a result of this understanding, the usefulness of monuments, especially their contribution to the quality of life of the population, can be acknowledged. Not only can this vision, which was developed for monument protection, be directly translated across to *Baukultur*, but it also illustrates the potential of the built cultural heritage as a central element of good *Baukultur*.

With the *Statute of the Federal Monuments Authority Austria*, which was also newly issued in 2011, notions of intermediation were introduced into the existing tasks of protection,

research and maintenance for the first time, anticipating, so to speak, the making *Baukultur* understandable guiding idea and the strategic guiding principle of ‘developing awareness of *Baukultur* and promoting suitable structures’. Various standards that are now in place, such as those relating to the energy efficiency of monuments, the protection of ensembles, and care for historic buildings, acquired an outstanding importance; these essentially constituted the foundations for later guidelines: apply and develop the sustainability principle; strengthen the centres of cities and towns; and take good care of architectural heritage and enhance it in contemporary style, as well as the following strategic guiding principles: strengthening the common good; holistic, long-term innovative planning; and using land and other resources wisely.

The need for a holistic approach to achieve sustainable results in the field of *Baukultur* has always been evident, particularly as regards the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.⁵ Challenges in this area can only be faced from the outset through targeted coordination, and communication and collaboration measures, whereby dialogue is actively sought and joint teams have a heterogeneous composition.⁶ Under the proposition that early communication helps to avoid conflicts, all possibilities provided by the legal system are being made use of. This applies, for example, to the submission of opinions during review procedures and to participation as a party in administrative procedures under other public authorities. Reports and missions again and again have made it clear that there have to be processes for the coordination of central and local government which, ideally, are initiated proactively: for instance, the associated supervision set up as a consequence of an advisory task force regarding the new Semmering base tunnel, or ongoing coordination discussions with City of Vienna representatives regarding a project planned within the UNESCO World Heritage *Historic Centre of Vienna* in the area occupied by the Hotel Inter-

Continental, Vienna Ice Skating Club (*Eislaufverein*), and the *Konzerthaus*.

Investment and development programmes in the UNESCO World Heritage domain are successfully being implemented as *collaborative arrangements* based on the administrative collaboration model applied by the façade restoration campaign, which has been practiced for decades at the interface between monument and townscape protection, and is underpinned by equivalent funding by the federal government, states, and municipalities. Subsidies in connection with the new *Baukultur* programme mentioned below will align themselves with this administrative practice. Exchanging success stories and experiences, as well as the creation of synergies in the areas of monument protection and *Baukultur*, is also a long-standing topic at European level, especially amongst the relevant working groups within the framework of the Work Plan for Culture 2019–2022 in Priorities A (Sustainability in cultural heritage) and B (Cohesion and well-being).

Recent developments

Through the fourth Austrian Building Culture Report – working title: *Baukulturpolitik konkret*⁷ (*Baukultur policy in concrete terms*) – the Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport commissioned the *Plattform Baukulturpolitik* (platform for *Baukultur* policy)⁸ and the Research Institute for Urban Management and Governance of the Vienna University of Economics and Business⁹ to prepare a regulation proposal for a new *Baukultur* programme. It comprises two measures:

- A *Baukultur* agency
- Funding scheme

The proposal is set out in the overall budget 32.01 for Arts and Culture as a measure in the Federal Finance Act 2021 and, as a reform project, is part of the recovery and resilience plan for Austria 2020–2026 in the field of arts and culture.¹⁰ The selected renovation projects are meant to become models of a living *Baukultur*

and thus, also, of an environment-conscious monument protection. Furthermore, the implementation of the *federal guidelines for Baukultur* should also become tangible.

The *Baukultur* agency will aim to achieve sustainable changes which, on the one hand, significantly increase *Baukultur*-related quality in the public sector and, on the other hand, further develop *Baukultur* across the board in Austria by improving framework conditions and raising awareness of *Baukultur*. The Agency should work in the following areas:

- Subsidies to cities and municipalities for *Baukultur*
- Research funding
- Advice and collaboration
- Quality development

The Agency is aligned with the *European Green Deal*, as described by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on 16 September 2020 under the title *New European Bauhaus*.¹¹ In addition, this model fits in perfectly with the current economic stimulus programmes, while combining economic recovery with cultural aspects and climate protection. The following goals have therefore been set for the Agency and funding scheme:

- Increase the social importance of *Baukultur* and architectural heritage
- Strengthen town and city centres
- Make use of *Baukultur* to reduce CO₂ emissions and protect the soil
- Strengthen due consideration for equal spatial access
- Ensure more efficient and quality-oriented public construction
- Improve due consideration of *Baukultur* policy in jurisprudence and other legal requirements
- Foster networking and knowledge transfer in the field of *Baukultur*

At the same time, ÖROK, the Austrian Spatial Planning Conference (institution for the coordination of spatial planning at the national level supported by the federal, state

and local authorities) was working on linking up the cultural, spatial, and climate protection sectors as part of the development of the Austrian spatial development plan *ÖREK 2030*.¹² Thereby, the central spatial planning goal – preserving the liveable cultural landscape and cultural assets worthy of protection¹³ – contained in ÖROK recommendations regarding *space saving, spatial management and active land policy* (April 2017) was being addressed and, for the first time in Austria, culture is to be positioned as a factor at the level of a nationwide, strategic spatial planning document. This is not only of considerable importance for the three cultural landscapes that are protected as UNESCO World Heritage sites in Austria,¹⁴ but also underlines the indispensable value of monument protection in the coordination of spatially relevant sectoral plans by local authorities.

Moreover, it is envisaged that the recommendations formulated in the ÖREK Partnership's *Strengthening Town and City Centres*,¹⁵ which are to improve the effectiveness of spatial planning and legal instruments for revitalising town and city centres, will be followed up in an implementation pact: *Making Room for Baukultur*. The pyramid-like figure regarding laws and instruments related to the strengthening of town and city centres makes the complexity of the structures in which one has to operate very clear (see Fig. 2). It should be emphasised that, in future, integrated urban development plans or comparable schemes should be created as a prerequisite for receiving funding. In this regard, architectural heritage is to be used and strengthened as both a starting point and a model for integrated urban development.¹⁶

Outlook

One of the five messages of the European Conference for Architectural Policies: High Quality Building for Everyone. *Baukultur and the Common Good in Europe*, 2018, in Vienna was that *Baukultur* has the potential to become Europe's calling card.¹⁷ The aim of the new *Baukultur* programme is to ensure that *Baukultur*, at any rate, does become Austria's calling card.

- 1 www.bmkoes.gv.at/Kunst-und-Kultur/baukultur/beirat-fuer-baukultur/publikationen (accessed 13.03.2022). Fields of action of the *Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture*: Development of towns, cities, and the landscape; Construction, restoration, and operation; Processes and procedures; Promoting awareness and public participation; Research and transfer of knowledge and expertise; Guidance, coordination, and cooperation. Strategic guiding principles of the *Third Austrian Building Culture Report*: raise awareness of *Baukultur* and promote suitable structures; strengthen the common good; plan holistically, innovatively, and to last; use land and other resources judiciously; and tie public funding to quality criteria.
- 2 The main legal basis is the Monument Protection Act, BGBl. 1923/533, version of BGBl. I 2013/92.
- 3 Ordinance on the establishment of the Advisory Council for *Baukultur*, BGBl. II No. 377/2008.
- 4 Elsa Brunner, 'Baukultur in Österreich. Von der Etablierung zur Aufwertung eines neuen Politikfeldes', in: *Baukultur und Kulturgüterschutz*, Forum 34, 2020, pp. 19–22.
- 5 UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*; implementing act: *Übereinkommen zum Schutz des Kultur- und Naturerbes der Welt*, BGBl. No. 60/1993.

- 6 The Pile Dwellings Board of Curators may be cited as an example of cross-regional collaboration: not only does it enable a common platform for the efficient coordination of measures between the federal government, the states of Carinthia and Upper Austria, and municipalities, associations, etc., but it also serves to control activities on the sites of finds and their surroundings in the sense promoted by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. In addition, the main scientific institutions are either included or pooled in a scientific advisory board. www.pfahlbauten.at (accessed 13.03.2022).
- 7 www.bmkoes.gv.at/baukultur#BKR4 (accessed 13.03.2022).
- 8 www.baukulturpolitik.at (accessed 13.03.2022).
- 9 www.wu.ac.at/urban, accessed 13.03.2022.
- 10 www.oesterreich.gv.at/nachrichten/allgemein/EU-Aufbauplan.html (accessed 13.03.2022), Sub-Komponente 4-C: Kunst & Kultur, pp. 529ff.
- 11 "But this is not just an environmental or economic project: it needs to be a new cultural project for Europe. [...] And we need to give our systemic change its own distinct aesthetic – to match style with sustainability." The difference between an air-conditioning solution with and without a design requirement is made quite clear by the blowing angel on the roof of the Vienna Burgtheater (the outlet opening of a historical ventilation system) compared with a current photovoltaic installation (see pp.101/102, figs. 3/4).

- 12 www.oerok.gv.at/oerek-2030 (accessed 13.03.2022).
- 13 www.oerok.gv.at/raum/themen/flaechensparen-flaechenmanagement-und-aktive-bodenpolitik (accessed 13.03.2022).
- 14 Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut cultural landscape, Wachau cultural landscape and Fertö/Neusiedlersee cultural landscape.
- 15 The ÖREK partnership on *Strengthening Town and City Centres in Austria* was a project within the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, www.oerok.gv.at/raum/themen/staerkung-der-orts-und-stadtkerne (accessed 13.03.2022).
- 16 Recommendation 4.
- 17 www.bmkoes.gv.at/Kunst-und-Kultur/baukultur/beirat-fuer-baukultur/publikationen.html (accessed 13.03.2022).

La culture du bâti en tant que carte de visite de l'Autriche

De la protection du patrimoine à la sauvegarde du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO et à la culture du bâti

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Le développement de la culture du bâti en Autriche au cours de la dernière décennie et demie est marqué sur le plan du contenu et organisationnel par des étapes successives de structuration et le renforcement constant des liens entre les domaines de la sauvegarde, du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO et de la culture du bâti. Les projets les plus récents dans le cadre du *Quatrième rapport sur la culture du bâti* en vue de l'amélioration des conditions-cadres juridiques, financières et structurelles poursuivent cet objectif de manière systématique. Il s'avère qu'il vaut la peine de s'investir dans des stratégies participatives à long terme et que la conclusion d'*accords politiques*, notamment lorsqu'ils sont ancrés dans la législation, ne constitue en aucun cas une tâche triviale. L'un des défis majeurs est incarné par la délimitation des frontières entre les secteurs culture, développement du territoire et protection climatique, qui se pose par exemple dans le cadre de l'élaboration du concept autrichien

de développement *ÖREK 2030 – Raum für Wandel*. Une grande importance est attribuée au niveau européen et, dans ce cadre, aux conclusions du Conseil de l'Europe sur le programme de travail en faveur de la culture 2019–2022, que ce soit au niveau des priorités A Développement durable dans le domaine du patrimoine culturel et B Cohésion sociale et bien-être.

Quoi qu'il en soit, l'Année européenne de la culture 2018, de même que la *Déclaration de Davos* adoptée au printemps, apporteront un sang nouveau à cette évolution. La notion stratégique de « qualité » qui y figure devrait de toute manière jouer un rôle dominant sur le plan de la mise au point des stratégies, l'élaboration des instruments de pilotage et la mise en application des mesures, y compris en Autriche.

Les deux années à venir, avec en 2022 le cinquantième anniversaire de la convention sur le patrimoine mondial

de l'UNESCO et en 2023 le centenaire de la loi sur la protection du patrimoine, le trentième anniversaire du patrimoine mondial en Autriche et les quinze années du Conseil consultatif pour la culture du bâti, ne soulignent pas uniquement les diverses dimensions temporelles de la prise de conscience des tâches et des bases légales respectives. Elles constituent également une opportunité d'honorer les progrès obtenus et, en raison des conditions-cadres améliorées en tant que pays des montagnes, des champs, des dômes et d'un peuple voué à la beauté, de progresser vers une époque nouvelle (les citations empruntées à l'hymne national autrichien constituent les bases de la thématique de la culture du bâti et sont tirées du dépliant *Baukultur kompakt* publié en 2019 dans le cadre de la diffusion de l'information sur la thématique de la culture du bâti).