

# Declaration of Rome (1983)

## Given:

- the immense variety and the qualitative and quantitative richness of the archaeological, architectural, historical and artistic, environmental and natural, archival and book heritage existing in Italy.
- the lack of available economic and financial resources,
- the extremely tense climate which is characteristic of the present stage of growth and transformation of Italian society,

Taking into consideration the fundamental cultural contributions continuously provided by Italian experts, not only to the knowledge of the history of art but also to theories of conservation and to the practice of restoration,

Noting also, in comparison with other countries, the permanent involvement of the Parliament, the Italian Government and, above all, of the concerned public services in the conservation of the cultural heritage,

Therefore, in the aim of rendering actions for the integrated conservation of the national, cultural heritage more incisive and more precise, the Italian National Committee, under the patronage of the Ministry of Cultural Property and of the Environment, recalling the work accomplished at the national symposia of Sorrento (1979) and of Naples (1981), discussed the following theme in Rome (9-10 June 1983) on the basis of earlier studies: "Monuments and Sites: conservation action in Italy today".

After hearing and discussing the reports and communications, the symposium noted the serious deficiencies which exist in Italy today in the field of the conservation and the restoration of the cultural heritage. These deficiencies are due, on the one hand, to the insufficiently clear relationship between theory and practice, and on the other hand, to the inherent dangers of the current political and socio-economic situation.

The Assembly noted specifically:

1. A co-ordination which is rare, even non-existent, among the various bodies involved in conservation at all levels : local, regional, national and international. This situation is aggravated by other factors, such as the lack of an organic structure in these institutions; the separation between the University and the government services in charge of cultural property; the absence of coordination among the Ministries and, above all, between Cultural Affairs and Public Works, though the latter provides considerable funding for the architectural heritage.
2. Serious consequences due to the fact that architectural restoration operations are too often awarded to insufficiently qualified professionals of the private and public sector. This situation proves the absolute necessity to employ competent restorers, having received university level training and post-graduate level specialized training.

3. Ulterior consequences due to the unsupervised work of new, unqualified, private contractors on monuments, historic centres and sites. This phenomenon has been accentuated by the poor health of the construction industry which has led certain contractors toward restoration work despite their lack of training, under the cover of recent, ambiguous legislation on architecture and town planning. This legislation is itself an expression of the present state of general confusion.

The Assembly, proposing to remedy point by point the aforementioned deficiencies and the errors attached to them,

- a. requests of the Parliament, the Government and the competent controlling bodies, a total involvement in the coordination of the administrative, didactic, normative, technical and cultural initiatives taken by national and international organisms, for a careful programming of architectural operations and for the rigorous supervision of the real qualifications of professionals and contractors working in the field of restoration.
- b. confirms and adopts the contents and conclusions of the "International Meeting of Co-ordinators for Training in Architectural Conservation" (organized by ICCROM, Rome, December 1982). During that meeting, the Assembly did indeed confirm the utmost importance of: the training of specialized personnel, in the historical and technical fields, in architecture and town planning who should be employed for all restoration work, according to the recognized multidisciplinary, scientific method of conservation work; and the strengthening of the competent international organizations for education and cultural training, such as ICCROM.

By the formulation of these recommendations to competent organisms and to the cultural world, the Assembly confirms the intention of ICOMOS to act and its readiness to cooperate for the most rapid practical application of these recommendations.