

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR *CULTURE AGAINST DISASTERS:* *PROTECTING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES* *AS PREVENTION OF NATURAL DISASTERS*

On 28 and 29 September 2018 in Ravello (Italy), the [European University Centre for Cultural Heritage \(CUEBC\)](#) realized the international seminar *Culture against disasters: protecting cultural landscapes as a prevention against natural disasters*.

The Seminar has been organized in the framework of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, with the support of the [European and Mediterranean Major Azards Agreement \(EUR-OPA\)](#), a Council of Europe programme whose aim is to reduce natural and man-made disasters.

[Should we simply protect cultural heritage from disasters, or make heritage protection an active tool for preventing them?](#) This is not a provocative question but the theme of the international seminar based on both common and infrequent observations.

Cultural landscapes - terrace farming together with traditional irrigation systems and farming techniques, and the knowledge these entail - are part of a territory's cultural heritage, but are also a record of "historical" transformations, still there today because they have successfully stood the test of dozens of extreme natural events. Protecting them therefore contributes to prevent locally recurring natural disasters. However, the agricultural activities that shape cultural landscapes have generally become less profitable either because farms need a lot of manpower or because nearly all farms reduce their size, which disqualifies them from many of the benefits of European Union agricultural policies. The decline in revenue leads to their abandonment and an increased risk of instabilities.

[The presentation by the Scientific Co-ordinator of the European University Centre for Cultural Heritage](#) summarized for the participants the main problems and challenges to make heritage protection a strategic mean for preventing disasters.

Representatives from the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies and Tourism, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and the Civil Protection Department, from the Italy's cultural landscapes Cinque Terre and Amalfi Coast, from the Italian media, associations of engineers, agronomists and geologists, representatives of farm industry associations (CIA, Coldiretti, Confagricoltura) actively participated in the meeting.



Experiences from the European Landscape Convention, the Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, from the Global Fire Monitoring Center based in Greece, the Centre for Scientific and Technical Research on Arid Regions based in Biskra, Algeria, from the United Nations programs for territorial development and the World Agricultural Heritage Foundation WAHF with the Bioversity International Organization have also been presented to contribute on defining methods which reduce the impact of natural disasters by involving local communities in the conservation of cultural heritage and its sustainable use for human development and quality of life.



The participants contributed identifying actions in support of farms which, through their work, contribute to maintain cultural heritage and thus to prevent disasters. The debate also highlighted the dual role played by the media in preventing disasters: publicising scientific observations on local risks and giving scientists and decision-makers access to local knowledge regarding traditional land management practices and the risks that currently exist.



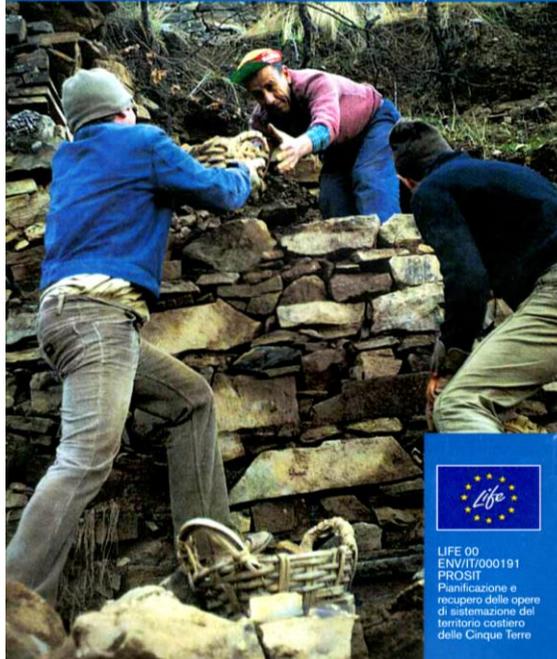
Criteria and methods that can be used to make protection of cultural landscapes an effective tool for preventing natural disasters and for sustainable human development were thus reflected in the conference's final recommendations, based on the knowledge of local stakeholders and endorsed by the experts. These recommendations are to be addressed to decision-making bodies at local, national and European level.



In addition, with the aim of moving on from theory to practice, the participants asked the European University Centre to develop a transnational pilot project, which could involve Greece, Algeria, another country from the southern shore of the Mediterranean and, in Italy, the Amalfi Coast and Cinque Terre and which will make it possible to test the conclusions of the two-day conference. The Council of Europe, through the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement, has undertaken to help develop the project and publicise it among institutions that may be interested in supporting it.



The next steps about this important initiative can be found in the official webpages of the European University Centre for Cultural Heritage (CUEBC) and the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement.



To know more

[European University Centre for Cultural Heritage website](#)

[Information materials in EUR-OPA website](#)

[Presentation of the Seminar](#)

[Final Press release](#)

[Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society](#)

[Faro Convention full text](#)

[European Year of Cultural Heritage](#)

[UNESCO Cultural Landscape website](#)

[European and Mediterranean Major Azards Agreement \(EUR-OPA\) website](#)

CULTURA CONTRO DISASTRI
LA PROTEZIONE DEI PAESAGGI CULTURALI
COME AZIONE DI PREVENZIONE DEI DISASTRI NATURALI

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