

Jacek Purchla

Preface

Memory and identity are the leading problems of Europe after communism. In this area, the member states of the Visegrad Group have a very special role to play as laboratories of thinking of cultural heritage at the outset of the new millennium.

Characteristically for the nations in this part of Europe, the cult of the past and reverence for monuments collided here with rapid and multidimensional change after 1989. Globalisation, integration and, above all, transformation processes unknown to Western Europe not only vitally affect our attitude to cultural heritage but also force us to revise the existing systems of heritage preservation.

Globalisation has fostered a major change to our attitude to the past. Within a brief period the classical notion of “monument” has been replaced by a broader, more dynamic term of “heritage.” Pressure for modernisation which is particularly strongly exerted on the cultural landscape of countries that are undergoing transformation, necessitates change of the system of cultural heritage preservation. The International Cultural Centre in Krakow, which has focused a lot of attention to this issue over the past twenty years, organised a conference of experts on “Protecting and safeguarding cultural heritage. The systems of management of the cultural heritage in the Visegrad countries” in 2010. This book is a fruit of this conference. I hope that it will not only initiate ongoing dialogue between

the neighbours on our common cultural heritage, but will also be an important voice of Central Europe in a global debate on preservation of cultural patrimony in the face of rapid change.

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Translated from the Polish by Monika Myszkiewicz