

**Abstract for the XII International Conference on Structural Analysis of Historical
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**BUILT HERITAGE MAINTENANCE AROUND EUROPE. ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT
MODELS AND THEIR SUSTAINABILITY**

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ABSTRACT

Preventive conservation of built heritage is recognized as an essential part of rational and sustainable heritage management. Regular maintenance can expand the life-span of buildings and their historical fabric, ensure the optimal use of financial resources and embodied energy, stimulate the market, contribute to preservation of craftsmanship, increase public safety and bring about many other benefits. Increasing number of projects and policies are being developed to realize that in practice. However, there is not much research done on their effectiveness and sustainability.

The *Monumentenwacht* scheme applied in Netherlands almost 50 years ago was a pioneering model based on regular inspections and maintenance works. Similar practices are being adapted in a number of other countries and regions (Belgium, Germany, Slovakia, UK, South Europe, Hungary, Lithuania) but they are much lesser known and discussed internationally. Though many of them have been inspired by Dutch or Flemish practice, they are not pure copies of the 'original' and feature significant differences in their origins, management structures, funding, focus of support, services provided, scope of activity, communication and other aspects. Some of them have been successfully running for years, others – seized to exist right after pilot projects.

To the knowledge of the author, such in-depth comparative analysis of *monumentenwacht*-type of projects as provided in this paper has never been done before (only descriptive presentations of separate cases). Such approach gives insight to the tendencies in the heritage sector, different methods of implementation, universally required conditions for such model to be successful.

Apart from the system of regular inspections, maintenance is also encouraged as cultural phenomena through measures of education and improved access to information. Nordic and Baltic countries feature over 20 heritage centres which provide specialized trainings to craftsmen and non-financial support to owners. Databases of craftsmen and contractors (e.g. Network of Heritage Advisors in Estonia) and accreditation systems facilitate often complicated search of specialists and market viability, ensure better quality of works. One-off maintenance campaigns raise public-awareness and make ground for bigger initiatives. Conservation manuals and other means of methodological help (e.g. SPAB technical advice line, National Maintenance Week) make specialist knowledge conceivable to every heritage owner.

Every mentioned model has a positive impact but none of them can bring about fundamental changes in isolation. Based on various case studies in UK and other countries, the author suggests that it is only the system that features financial support, non-financial support and enforcement can be truly effective. Scotland, in which maintenance legislation is underway, is likely to be a pioneer in having a combination of the three components.

This research addresses the lack of easily accessible information on different practices and aims to provide actors of heritage sector with a possibility to implement preventive conservation strategies in a more informed way.