

FACT SHEET

Heritage conservation in Rome

1. Introduction

1.1 The Panel on Home Affairs is considering an overseas duty visit to study heritage conservation in Athens and Rome. As such, the Research and Library Services Division has prepared two separate fact sheets providing some basic information on heritage conservation in Athens and Rome. This fact sheet presents facts relating to heritage conservation in Rome.

2. Background of the city

Physical geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rome is the capital of Italy with an area of 1 285 sq km. ● Located in the Lazio region, Rome is the most populated city in Italy with a population of about 2.7 million. ● An enclave of Rome is the State of the Vatican City, the sovereign territory of the Holy See⁽¹⁾ and the smallest nation in the world. The whole Vatican City was registered as a World Heritage Site in 1984.
Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rome is one of the oldest cities in the world with more than 2 500 years of history. It conserves a rich historical and architectural heritage, ranging from the monuments of Ancient Rome to the Fascist architecture in the 1920s-1940s. ● Famous archaeological sites and monuments include the Aurelian Wall, the Basilica di San Clemente, the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, the Baths of Caracalla, the Castel Sant'Angelo, the Capitoline Hill, the Colosseum, the Largo di Torre Argentina, the Monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, the Palazzo Barberini, the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, the Palazzo della Farnesina, the Palatine, the Piazza Navona, the Piazza di Spagna, the Roman Forum, the Santa Maria in Trastevere, the Sistine Chapel, the St.Peter's Basilica, the Trevi Foundatin and the Villa Borghese.
World Heritage Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The historic centre of Rome was registered as a World Heritage Site in 1980. In 1990, the designated area was extended to include the properties of the Holy See located in the historic centre of Rome.

Note: (1) The term "Holy See" primarily refers to the diocese of Rome, presided over by its bishop (i.e. the Pope), but the meaning has widened to include the central government of the Roman Catholic Church.

3. Institutional arrangement

The Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Italy has developed a decentralized system for heritage conservation with active involvement of the local authorities (regions, provinces and municipalities) in heritage work. At the national level, the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities was created in 1998 to administer the cultural policies in Italy, including the conservation of historic assets.
Soprintendenze	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities administers the heritage conservation policies through its local administrative branches (Soprintendenze) specializing in various aspects of cultural heritage. For example, the Soprintendenza Architettonica is responsible for the management and conservation of buildings and sites of architectural interest. The Soprintendenza Archeologica handles the management and conservation of archaeological sites.
The regional authority of Lazio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The regional authority of Lazio is tasked with the responsibility of formulating the regional heritage conservation policies and exercising administrative responsibility for its historic assets in the Lazio region. Recent constitutional reform allows the regional authorities to possess concurrent legislative power with the central government in managing the historic assets and promoting cultural activities.
The provincial authority of Rome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provincial authority of Rome is entrusted with the duties of co-ordinating the cultural policies among the municipalities in Rome, such as the allocation of regional funding to different municipalities.
The Cultural Department of the Rome Municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cultural Department of the Rome Municipality is responsible for the restoration and maintenance of historic assets under the supervision of the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities. The Department also organizes a wide range of cultural activities and events to promote and support heritage conservation in Rome. For example, it organizes the annual event – "White Nights" – to offer free access to monuments during the event period.

4. Legal framework

The Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 9 of the Italian Constitution establishes the country's obligation to protect and preserve the landscape and the historical and artistic national heritage.
Legislative Decree No. 42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative Decree No. 42, <i>Code of the Cultural and Landscape Heritage</i>, was passed in 2004 as the principal legislation governing heritage conservation in Italy. It unifies all Italian laws with respect to cultural and natural heritage, as well as incorporating the relevant international conventions of which Italy is a signing party. • The <i>Code of the Cultural and Landscape Heritage</i> serves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) identify the assets of historic, artistic, archaeological, architectural or landscape interest for conservation; (b) prescribe for the protection measures governing the conservation of the historical and architectural heritage; (c) set out the penalties for damage and unauthorized works to historic assets; and (d) provide the legislative basis for the Ministry for Heritage and Culture Activities to devolve additional functions of heritage conservation to the regional authorities.
Planning Ordinances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional planning ordinances and municipal regulations are passed by the local and regional authorities for the protection of historic areas and buildings.
Constitutional amendment in 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The constitutional amendment in 2001 opens up Italy's heritage conservation system to a more federal-oriented structure by introducing concurrent legislative power of the central government and the regions in cultural heritage policies.

5. Heritage protection system

Scope of protection	
Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Legislative Decree No. 42 governs the protection of cultural heritage in Italy, which consists of cultural properties and landscape assets.
Cultural properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural properties consist of immovable and movable things which are of artistic, historical, archaeological, ethno-anthropological, archival or bibliographical interest, and of any other thing identified by law or in accordance with the law as testifying to the values of civilization.
Landscape assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape assets consist of buildings and areas which are the expression of historical, cultural, natural, morphological and aesthetic values of the land, and any other assets identified by law or in accordance with the law.
Protection of historic assets	
Protection measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major protection measures applicable to cultural heritage include listing, maintenance of listed buildings and pre-emption.
Listing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural properties are protected if they are listed by the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities. Works of any kind on cultural properties are subject to authorization by the Soprintendenze. Each province sets up a committee with the responsibility for determining those landscape assets to be listed. Details of any proposed works to the listed landscape assets must be submitted to the relevant regional authorities for approval.
Maintenance of listed buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities has the power to enforce the carrying out of any necessary works to a listed building and require the owner to reimburse the costs so incurred.
Pre-emption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owners of listed buildings who plan to sell their properties must notify the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities such intention. The Ministry has the power to purchase the listed building concerned by pre-emption at the same price offered by a potential buyer.

6. Approach adopted for heritage conservation

Emphasis on preserving the historic layout of the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The historic fabric in the city centre of Rome has been preserved almost in its entirety with minimal alternation to the old spatial layout of the city. This strategy has constrained the city's expansion and development. For example, the narrow and irregular streets in Rome are not designed to cope with the hectic traffic demand, thus resulting in a high level of congestion and pollution.
Blending of old and new buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rome has managed to blend old and new buildings in the city, with most of the new constructions sited along its periphery, particularly in areas devoid of significant monuments. Famous contemporary architecture in the city's periphery includes the Jubilee Church, the Contemporary Art and Architecture Centre, and the Auditorium Music Hall.
Large-scale renovation works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2000, Rome carried out a large-scale renovation project, aiming at: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> restoration and extension of artistic, environmental, archaeological, architectural and monumental heritage, including both the renovation of existing cultural areas and the creation of new ones; and renovation of the city's architectural heritage.
Public participation in heritage conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government encourages public participation in heritage conservation through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> heritage promotion through websites, exhibitions and free admission to monuments (e.g. the "White Nights" and the Italian Culture Heritage Week); educational programmes (e.g. seminars and short courses on heritage conservation)⁽²⁾; non-profit organizations involved in the promotion of heritage conservation (e.g. associations and foundations); and development of public-private partnership in the management of historical properties and sites.

Note: (2) For example, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage runs a regular training course on the conservation of built heritage in Rome. The Centre is an inter-governmental organization dedicated to the conservation of cultural heritage.

7. Funding mechanism

Government funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities and the local and regional authorities provide public funding for heritage conservation.
Lottery fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fixed percentage of the national lottery revenue is allocated for the restoration and preservation of cultural properties.
Bank Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundations established by local savings banks play a key role in financing cultural activities in Italy.
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundraising and contributions from non-governmental organizations and private associations serve as another funding source.

8. Economic incentives available for heritage conservation

Tax incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tax incentives include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> exemption of the listed buildings from inheritance tax; deduction from taxable income of all donations and sponsorship given by individuals and corporations; and allowance for property owners to deduct from their taxable income the expenditure incurred in the maintenance and restoration of their listed buildings.
Interest subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government subsidizes interest on loans taken out by private owners for carrying out authorized conservation works to their listed properties.
Government's financial assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities may contribute not more than 50% of the expenses incurred by property owners for restoration and conservation of their cultural properties.

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