

**URBAN HERITAGE BETWEEN CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT: THE FRENCH CASE.**

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Over the past few decades sustainability concerns has gained central importance in the contemporary debate on the future development of cities, due to the fast urbanization, the increasing pollution, the intensity of climate change and resources consumption. In this worldwide context a particular category of city is suffering from pressures never seen before: the historic urban landscape where urban conservation strategies have to be integrated within the large goals of sustainable development, as affirmed by the recent UNESCO’s Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape adopted in 2011. The Recommendation reflects the actual international attention given in order to find a holistic approach which integrates urban conservation and development in a social, environmental, economic and cultural sustainable balance.

In this framing certain questions emerge: is it possible that sustainable development aims coexist with the principles of urban heritage preservation? What could be the connection between urban heritage and sustainable development? How urban conservation can open up to sustainability, while keeping intact tangible and intangible values and heritage? What are the strategies and policies implemented?

Recognizing sustainability as a primary challenge that urban conservation faces, the current paper aims to present, starting from an international perspective, the French case study. In particular the article reviews the influence of national legislation concerning planning and environment, which includes sustainability aims, on urban conservation tools, notably the *Secteur Sauvegardé*, the *ZPPAUP (Zone de Protection du Patrimoine Architectural, Urbain et Paysager)*, the *AVAP (Aires de mise en valeur de l’architecture et du patrimoine)* and the *PLU (Plan Local d’Urbanisme) Patrimonial*. Actually, all the preservation areas above-mentioned must be in coherence with the environmental, social, economic and cultural sustainability goals of their own territory, contained in several strategic documents, such as the *Plan Climat*, the *Plan Biodiversité*, the *PADD (Projet d’Aménagement et de Développement Durable)*. Therefore an integrated approach appears to be necessary, both at theoretical and operative level. Thus which are the results achieved?

The papers aims to understand if urban conservation and sustainability ambition are compatible or in contrast by presenting the French specific case as a possible bestpractice in order to stimulate knowledge exchanges and share experiences to compare.