

## 'Monumentenwacht'



Tuned with the demand of maintenance and a social expression of its need, in 1973 the organisation 'Monumentenwacht' was created in the Netherlands. Since 1990 several implementations of this model have been set up in Europe (Belgium-Flanders, Denmark, England, Scotland, Italy, Hungary, Germany).

These non for profit organisations provide advice on a regular maintenance and preventive measures for valuable buildings with regular inspections of one entire building by two experts, and a final report to be used by owners for adequate management. By monitoring changes and maintaining with minimal intervention, large and costly restorations are avoided.

Four main conservation goals are achieved:

- retention of authentic material,
- cost-efficient management,
- public involvement
- raised awareness.



Regular maintenance with minimal intervention:  
Monumentenwachter replacing broken tiles on a roof.

## Preventive Conservation Maintenance and Monitoring of Monuments and Sites

### Preventive attitude towards built heritage: the basis of conservation

The importance of regular maintenance and preventive interventions on built heritage was stressed already in the Venice Charter (1964) and promoted worldwide by the World Heritage Convention (1972). According to these texts, preventive attitude implies adequate technical improvement, proper management and social involvement.



Due to its fundamentally sustainable character it is becoming today a key-field in conservation.

Raymond Lemaire  
International  
Centre for Conservation

Kasteelpark Arenberg 1  
B-3001 Heverlee-Leuven  
Belgium  
[www.kuleuven.asro.be/rlicc](http://www.kuleuven.asro.be/rlicc)  
[www.sprecomah.eu/network](http://www.sprecomah.eu/network)  
[rlicc@asro.kuleuven.be](mailto:rlicc@asro.kuleuven.be)  
[koenraad.vanbalen@bwk.kuleuven.be](mailto:koenraad.vanbalen@bwk.kuleuven.be)

Phone: +32 16 32 16 96  
Fax: +32 16 32 19 83  
E-mail: [rlicc@asro.kuleuven.be](mailto:rlicc@asro.kuleuven.be)



Erfgoedhuis Den Wolsack  
Oude Beurs 27 - 2000 Antwerpen  
T +32 3 212 29 50  
F +32 3 212 29 51  
[info@monumentenwacht.be](mailto:info@monumentenwacht.be)  
[www.monumentenwacht.be](http://www.monumentenwacht.be)

  
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## SPRECOMAH

### Platforms of practical exchange

As a result of the expanding interest in preventive conservation, interdisciplinary seminars (SPRECOMAH-Seminars on PREventive CONservation, Maintenance and Monitoring of the Architectural Heritage) brought together experts in conservation with the main aim to draft **guidelines for promoting preventive conservation activities**.

Documentation and monitoring is essential: dr. Mario Santana introducing the different types of recording techniques.



Participants of the SPRECOMAH seminar, 2007

The role of non-destructive investigation tools: expert from BAM institute Berlin demonstrating the infrared radar technique.



The results of the seminars pointed to the **gap in collaboration between research and practice** and to the **potentials of complementing existing technical tools**.

<http://sprecomah.eu>

## PRECOMOS network

The sustainability of the Monumentenwacht experience, the results of SPRECOMAH and the basic aims of UNESCO/WHC steered the creation of an **international network of experts**.

<i>Name:</i>	<b>PRECOMOS</b> PREventive CONservation, Monitoring and Maintenance of Monuments and Sites
<i>Type:</i>	Open international worldwide network
<i>Founded by:</i>	Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation – RLICC (Belgium) and Monumentenwacht Vlaanderen – MWV (Belgium)
<i>Founded in:</i>	October 2007
<i>Member:</i>	Over 100 members from different NGOs, Universities, private and public research institutions, ICOMOS chapters, UNESCO chairs, freelance experts, local and national authorities for cultural heritage protection.
<i>Member countries:</i>	Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Israel, Italy, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United States.
<i>Activity:</i>	First meeting of the network members 17-19/12/2007 in Leuven (Belgium)
<i>Tasks:</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide an international experience-exchange platform;</li> <li>2. Develop projects to enhance exchange;</li> <li>3. Develop new appropriate tools and techniques to improve preventive preservation strategies;</li> <li>4. Develop exemplary field applications considering the variety of cultural and social contexts.</li> </ol>
<i>Short-term:</i>	Serve as scientific support to the <b>UNESCO chair on Preventive conservation</b>

## UNESCO Chair

The network provides an international experience-exchange platform, and aims to serve as support to the **new UNESCO chair on preventive conservation, maintenance and monitoring of monuments and sites**, established in 2008, on behalf of the RLICC (K.U.Leuven), MWV and the University of Cuenca.

The chair aims to identify research and educational activities within it, so to contribute to:

- Identifying the **particularities** of preservation **policies and practices**;
- Developing new **appropriate tools and techniques** to improve preventive preservation strategies;
- Developing **legal frameworks, policies and exemplary field applications** considering the variety of cultural and social contexts.

Preventive conservation principles on worldwide scale can effectively contribute to **cost-efficiently preserve authenticity**, to **valorize the intangible heritage** (traditional techniques) and to **enhance social involvement** in preservation.



WH Site Historic city of Cuenca (Ecuador) – focus area of maintenance plan in preparation by Universidad de Cuenca and the K.U. Leuven.