THE ROLE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – A CASE STUDY OF PULA, CROATIA

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The paper reflects upon the role of cultural heritage in sustainable development, comparing European best practice models and local experiences in valorization of specific categories of immovable cultural heritage in the city of Pula, Croatia. The main goal is to explore how the local historic urban environment, consisting of the historic urban core with the Roman Amphitheater and former military zones in the harbour with fortifications and barracks, could contribute to sustainable development and quality of life of the local community. The analysis of European examples of good practice (Suomenlinna Fortress in Helsinki, Seaplane Museum in Tallinn, etc.) will indicate possible models of sustainable management and valorization of these specific categories of heritage, which could at the same time enhance the process of urban regeneration and social revitalization. Since culture, including heritage, presents the fourth pillar of sustainable development, we applied the concept of cultural economy, which implies sustainable development based on the strategic use of local culture, local resources and local participative democracy. Confronting global trends with local commitment to sustainable development, we set the hypothesis that sustainable heritage management, based on the strategic valorization of unique local cultural resources, could strengthens the identity and economy of local community, create new jobs, increase the quality of life of local residents and the pleasure of visitors, improve the image and attract investors, stimulate consumption and prolong the tourist season. Our research indicated that the sustainable urban development should be based on the strategic use of the city’s more valuable assets, consisting of unique cultural, historical and natural heritage: the oldest historic city core on the eastern coast of the Adriatic and specific cultural resources such as the Amphitheater, the Roman monuments, the nearby Brijuni islands and the legacy of the former Austria’s main naval port with its powerful fortification system.

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