THE TORUN GUIDELINES

FOR CONFERENCES IN THE FIELD OF STONE CONSERVATION

INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasing information and changing dissemination technology it seems an appropriate moment to reflect on ways to improve the quality and accessibility of knowledge in the field of stone conservation.

As knowledge increases rapidly, teams working on stone conservation have become more specialised and often present their results at specialist meetings. This trend may increase the potential for isolated perspectives and the risk that knowledge may not reach its intended goals.

The general congresses on stone deterioration and conservation organised every 4 years since 1972 give a useful snapshot of the different trends of stone conservation and provide a multidisciplinary forum for discussion, complementing the specialist meetings. However, it can be difficult for them to encompass all the different trends and fields of stone conservation.

In recent decades there have been a number of calls to improve the quality and impact of knowledge in the conservation field. In response, there have been a number of improvements, such as more review articles and multi-author textbooks which give new researchers some of the background needed. Electronic publication of full text articles from most journals makes the peer-reviewed literature more readily available. Nevertheless, most conference proceedings still have limited electronic distribution.

With the aim of improving the quality and the dissemination of knowledge through congresses in the field of stone conservation, the 11th International Congress on Deterioration and Conservation of Stone, and the 13th meeting of the ICOMOS International Stone Committee, which met in Torun on September 15th to 20th 2008, adopted the following text.

THE GUIDELINES

1. Planning

When planning conferences organisers should review other conferences already scheduled in the field, in order to separate their own conference from others by at least six months. The aim is to increase the potential pool of participants and to increase the likelihood of original research being presented.

2. Selection of papers

The selection of papers for formal conferences should be based on a thorough review by at least two experts. Organisers, assisted by their scientific committees, should check for and refuse papers that have been, or are about to be, published in proceedings of another conference. Published papers (whether oral or poster) should meet minimum standards, including:

• precisely defined research methodologies

• appropriate reference citations

• advancing knowledge in the field.

3. Communication among participants

Organisers should encourage formal and informal communication among conference participants. These may include discussion sessions, panel discussions and workshops.

4. Seeking quality and measuring outcomes

Organisers, assisted by their scientific committees, should ensure good quality papers. In addition, organisers should measure the outcomes of their conference. Measures adopted may include reviews of the conference and opportunities for user feedback, such as a web page for participant responses, and quality rankings.

5. Dissemination strategy

To facilitate rapid dissemination of the ideas presented at the conference, organisers should plan for electronic dissemination of the proceedings. This should be arranged within a short period of time (e.g. a year) to ensure that the results achieve a wide and long-lasting distribution.

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