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Venise, 19.5.2023 - Discours du Président de la confédération Alain Berset à l'occasion de la première réunion de l'Alliance de Davos pour la culture du bâti - Seules les paroles prononcées font foi.

Speaking about *Baukultur* in Venice - what could be simpler than that! And at UNESCO's offices in the Palazzo Zorzi in this marvellous city.

But we all know that it's not quite that simple. It is not easy for the 50,000 people who live here, in this Unesco World Heritage Site that attracts almost 20 million visitors a year.

But Venice is the right place to talk about *Baukultur* because beauty is an important criterion for high-quality *Baukultur*, and because *Baukultur* is much more than a beautiful building.

Four months ago, at the international ministerial conference in Davos, 50 ministries of culture, inter-governmental organisations, NGOs and businesses came together to set up the Davos *Baukultur* Alliance

After the Davos Declaration for a high-quality *Baukultur* of 2018 and the publication of the Davos *Baukultur* Quality System in 2021, the Davos Alliance is another milestone in the Davos Process.

I am very pleased that we have managed to come so far in just five years that the Davos Declaration has become a reference for better planning and building and that we were able to define eight criteria for high-quality *Baukultur*, which have become a widely recognised standard.

From good governance and functionality to environmental justice, from economic viability to consideration of the spatial context, from social diversity to genius loci and last but not least - beauty, too!

The challenges facing our living environment are great:

- Climate change and climate mitigation,
- the biodiversity crisis,
- demographic change and weakening social cohesion,
- geo-political shifts
- and war in Europe.

We are struggling with a shortage of resources, negative effects of globalisation, and a lack of renewable energy.

All these challenges have a significant impact on the way we should shape our built environment. The debate on this issue is in full swing.

And what is striking is that the high quality of our *Baukultur* once again risks being side-lined! As if it were a luxury, something trivial.

And yet high-quality *Baukultur* means a way of building, that is sparing in its use of resources, that takes account of the built environment and surrounding landscapes, that enhances quality of life and that preserves built heritage.

For example, preserving and maintaining buildings that may have existed for hundreds of years is by definition sustainable. New builds generate three times more CO2 emissions than renovations, The culture of renovation is therefore a relevant factor in the climate debate. As well as innovation and creativity in contemporary architecture.

In the Davos *Baukultur* Alliance, we have established a forum for high-quality *Baukultur*, bringing together the public, the business and civil society. The alliance is open to other countries, companies and organisations that want to join. The only condition is a commitment to the Davos Declaration and the Davos Quality Criteria.

Quality demands on the built environment are rising and those calls are coming from the public. More and more people are already making use of legal avenues to appeal against new projects and planning proposals.

And they are right to do so. In future, high-quality *Baukultur* will be the key to ensuring that building developments are successful and enjoy acceptance and support.

Baukultur is something that affects us all. A high-quality built environment feeds into our identity and has a positive impact on social and economic coexistence.

So communities, companies and organisations should jointly stand up for high, comprehensive quality, and invest in it to be successful. That is precisely what the Davos *Baukultur* Alliance aims to achieve.

Buildings have a material value - that can be quantified. And they have an immaterial value - that is much harder to quantify.

The goal must be to shape our living space in such a way that it offers the highest benefit for the community, and at the same time is also economically interesting and viable for private individuals.

To balance these considerations, we need rules, we need innovation, we need debate, with all partners.

Today's event is a contribution to this debate.

That is the task of the new Davos *Baukultur* Alliance. To find the best solutions in multisectoral and transdisciplinary discussions. To offer up solutions for a high-quality *Baukultur* for all, that is affordable.

After 2018 and 2021, today is the third time we are discussing aspects of *Baukultur* here in Venice at the opening of the Architecture Biennale.

I am very pleased to be able to do so in this special atmosphere, a global gathering on architecture, with our new partners from the private sector.

So I'd like to thank all those who are working with us to achieve our common goals, especially UNESCO, in whose regional office we are privileged to be today. As well as the World Economic Forum.

Thank you for coming, thank you for your commitment to high-quality *Baukultur*, thank you for your contribution to the Davos Process.

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