

# Rachel Carson Center Perspectives

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### **Recommendations for Policymakers**

Drawing on the lessons presented in the papers contained in this volume, there are three recommendations we want to make to policymakers concerned with environmental and disaster-related regulation. We argue that these present an opportunity to make policies more inclusive of the diverse groups in contemporary European society, innovative in the solutions they present, and reflective on the complexity of the challenges that face the European community today.

#### **Recommendation 1: Acknowledge the existence and relevance of counternarratives**

Many different memories exist regarding conservation and restoration practices, as well as disaster management, and policymakers must be careful not to negate the multiplicity of narratives. The relevance of memories—reflecting both dominant narratives and various counternarratives—that exist, especially amongst less vocal citizens, should be acknowledged and incorporated in policymaking. Doing so can reduce existing vulnerabilities and avoid the creation of new vulnerabilities. Also, it will make for more sustainable policies that are acceptable to communities, and therefore more effective. Policies that recognize counternarratives will be more inclusive and enhance social cohesion, while also achieving better results in preserving critical heritage and preparing for disasters.

For case studies elaborating on this recommendation, see Bolton, Colten and Grismore, Farjon, Fredriksson et al, Goodbody, LaRocco, and Sutherland.

#### **Recommendation 2: Utilize citizens' memories as a source of local knowledge**

Memories of citizens can provide a source of knowledge that is unavailable to policymakers by means of science or other institutionalized sources of knowledge. They should be acknowledged as vital sources of information for mitigation strategies in restoration and conservation practices, as well as in disaster management. Engaging with

these sources enhances the transmission of heritage and enables social innovation. Recognizing and using memory as a source of knowledge makes for innovative policy-making that can be more effective in its mitigating force, while also serving to legitimize people's experiences, and thereby legitimizing policy for the public.

Creating instruments to engage community would identify the value of resources used by the people.

For case studies elaborating on this recommendation, see Bolton, Fredriksson et al., LaRocco, and Sutherland.

### **Recommendation 3: Support resilience in communities by recognizing the role of both remembering and forgetting**

Resilient communities must balance practices of remembering and forgetting. Forgetting can occur both actively and passively, be led by different stakeholders in both the public and private sector, and be both benign or malign both in practice and in effect. While forgetting can be a means to move forward after a disaster, it can also obstruct prevention and mitigation if the lessons learned are lost and not translated into risk-reduction strategies. To support the formation and continuation of resilient communities, policymakers should recognize the different ways in which remembering and forgetting occur in societies, and be aware of their various implications. Recognizing these processes of forgetting makes for policy that is more reflective of the complexity of issues for different stakeholders, and can, in this way, be more effective in enhancing resilience.

For case studies elaborating on this recommendation, see Baez Ullberg, Colten and Grismore, Fredriksson et al., Parrinello, Simpson, Sutherland.