

Cultural Heritage Preservation Case Study:

Cultural Heritage Preservation Case Study: Historic City of Venice

1. Introduction

- **Venice:** a historic city in northern Italy built across a lagoon of more than 100 small islands.
- Venice and its lagoon are inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site of outstanding universal value.

2. Heritage Significance

- An extraordinary architectural ensemble spanning Byzantine, Gothic and Renaissance styles.
- Landmarks include St Mark's Basilica, the Doge's Palace and the Grand Canal.
- A unique urban form shaped by canals rather than roads.

3. Threats

- **Acqua alta:** periodic flooding worsened by subsidence and rising sea levels.
- Mass tourism strains infrastructure and displaces residents.
- Lagoon erosion, pollution and large cruise ships damage the fragile environment.

4. Preservation Measures

- The **MOSE** mobile barrier system defends against high tides.
- Restrictions on large cruise ships and tourist numbers aim to reduce pressure.
- Ongoing restoration maintains historic buildings and foundations.

5. Lessons

- Illustrates the challenge of preserving living heritage cities under climate change.
- Shows the need to balance tourism, residents and conservation.
- Demonstrates engineering and policy responses to environmental risk.