

50. Venice and its Lagoon (Italy) (C 394)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1987

Criteria (i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Programme for the Safeguarding of Venice: since 1966 more than 1,500 projects worth over 50 million Euros (mainly conservation and restoration projects)

Previous monitoring missions

October 2015: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/RAMSAR Reactive Monitoring mission; January 2020: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/RAMSAR Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Concern over the announcement of a universal exhibition in Venice (issue resolved)
- Effects arising from use of transportation infrastructure
- Inadequate planning tools
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation, including damage to building fabric and cultural context, through conversion of residences for tourist accommodation or commercial use
- Proposals for large infrastructure, navigation and construction projects (including new offshore platform, new terminals, tourist port and large leisure facilities) in the Lagoon and its immediate setting
- Potential negative environmental impacts triggered by motorboats, cruise ships and oil tankers
- Management and institutional factors / Governance / Challenges in co-ordination between the multiple government and non-government institutions involved in conservation, tourism, management and regulation
- Climate change and severe weather events / Climate Change impacts on the Lagoon ecology and built fabric

Illustrative material see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/>

Current conservation issues

A joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/Ramsar Advisory mission took place on 27-31 January 2020. The mission assessed progress related to issues addressed in Decision **43 COM 7B.86** and studied the state of conservation of the property with a special focus on the consequences of the high tide events of the end of 2019. The report of this mission is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/documents/>.

On 14 February 2020, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report and an updated report was also provided on 1 February 2021, which are available at the above-mentioned link, outlining the following:

- The 'Climate Action Plan' is foreseen to be completed in June 2021. The 'Water Plan of the Municipality of Venice' was prepared and submitted to the World Heritage Centre in July 2019. Subsequently, the document was subjected to a regional Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), after which it was approved by the Municipality of Venice. This document aims to support territorial planning in relation to hydraulic safety of new interventions. The related Water Plans of the individual municipalities in the Lagoon are also under preparation. The 'Morphological and Environmental Plan of the Venice Lagoon' is foreseen to be finalized by the end of 2021. The

assessment of this document profits from the result of the above SEA. The now finalised new sediment management guidelines for the Venice Lagoon are closely linked to this Plan, and are currently under the legal publication process;

- The global Covid-19 pandemic has led to a drastic drop in visitor numbers to Venice, severely affecting the city's economy. It has also led to the need to revise the 'Project of Territorial Governance of Tourism in Venice'. A Smart Control Room has been set up to monitor and collect visitor data and an electronic database created to monitor and register the short-term rental of private apartments. A web-based tool will operate access-fee payments for day visitors from 2022 and will provide the option to control the number of daily visitors and encourage redirecting visits to less busy periods. Funding was provided for the creation of a World Heritage Site Info Point at Forte Marghera as an access hub to Venice, and a project has been launched for the enhancement of traditional craftsmanship within the property;
- Stricter regulations are applied to the retail day stalls, tourism product retail and the creation of new tourism infrastructure. Green areas have been rehabilitated. Public housing is being refurbished and the possibilities enhanced to provide rental apartments for residents and students. Incentives are provided for renovating the facades of building fronts in the historic centre of Venice. Mobility infrastructure improvements are planned;
- The availability of some terminals in Marghera to temporarily accommodate larger cruise ships on their days of inactivity emerged as a short- to medium-term solution to reroute large ships from the San Marco-Giudecca channel. The State Party is investigating further options for a permanent solution. Additionally, stricter parameters are being applied to ships currently passing through the Lagoon area;
- The MoSE tide defense barriers are reported to be 95% completed, and the system is already operational. The full system, including maintenance guidelines and a permanently manned control room in the Arsenal area, will be implemented by the end of 2021. Studies have been carried out on possible environmental effects of the differentiated inlet closures, and further investigations to this end are on-going;
- Progress is reported in updating the Management Plan and revising the management/governance system of the property, taking into consideration the planned buffer zone. The draft document is planned to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre. The related Minor Boundary Modification will be resubmitted to the Committee, taking into consideration its recommendations (Decision **43 COM 8B.46**);
- Progress is also reported towards an integrated strategy at national, regional and local levels for monitoring the vulnerability of the property to climate change and disaster risk through the implementation of a series of ongoing and planned activities;
- Brief information is provided on ongoing or proposed major projects. A procedure is not yet in place for notifying development plans and projects to the World Heritage Centre in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. A policy and legal framework for Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) is currently missing as well. The State Party is investigating ways to comply with the related Committee requests;
- In relation to the recently-constructed LPG storage facility within the property in Chioggia, information is provided about new legal measures that provides for both a ban on the construction of new plants and the prohibition of starting the operation of LPG storage facilities already authorized but not yet in operation. Previously adopted authorizations are now being re-evaluated;
- An updated Road-Map was submitted, and a brief preliminary report on the high tide event of November 2019 has been provided.

On 15 April 2021, the State Party submitted additional information related to measures on transport and regulation of cruise ship traffic in the Venice Lagoon, and the launch of a competition of ideas and collecting proposals to reroute traffic outside the Lagoon.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party report addresses the recommendations of the last Committee Decision. The details presented about the implementation of the tourism management strategy are welcome. While several additional tools and controlling mechanisms are in place to limit the continuous increase of tourism

infrastructure in Venice itself, these efforts are hindered by the restricting nature of national legislation. The extremely high number of visitors to Venice is considered problematic and is closely related to the (social) carrying capacity of Venice and the Lagoon area and the quality of life of residents and is a main factor threatening the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. While the number of tourists drastically decreased due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it also highlighted the need for more sustainable tourism management and the development of a more diverse resilient economic basis for the future of the property and its inhabitants. The reported renovation of public housing and other public infrastructure improvements should be acknowledged. These alone may not be sufficient to turn the tide of the depopulation of Venice and other historic centres in the Lagoon, and their resulting serious negative impacts to the functionality of the urban areas.

While legal bans already exist for ships over 40.000 gross ton to enter the Venice Lagoon, it has no practical effect, as no alternative exists for the mooring of these large ships. Timeframes for the implementation to temporarily reroute ships over 40.000 gross ton from the San Marco Basin and the Giudecca Canal potentially to moor in Marghera are required, but no major investments should be encouraged for this option. The State Party should continue searching for a long-term solution with utmost urgency, prioritizing the option of banning large ships from the Lagoon altogether, and preferably redirecting them to more suitable ports in the region.

The exceptional high tide event of November 2019 focused attention anew on the property's vulnerability. All stakeholders are to be commended for their efforts and their joint action to mitigate the damage done. Efforts of the State Party should be also acknowledged for completing and operationalizing the MoSE system. The impacts of the construction and operation of the system should continue to be closely monitored. Appropriate mitigation measures need to be developed for any potential and ascertained negative impacts on the ecosystem of the Lagoon.

A joint and coordinated approach is needed by all stakeholders to enhance existing efforts and policies to mitigate the negative impacts of human interventions in the Lagoon ecosystem. This calls for alignment of the 'Climate Action Plan', the 'Morphological and Environmental Plan of the Venice Lagoon', the Water Plans of the municipalities and other relevant documents to ensure the long-term protection and preservation of this unique and complex environmental area. The industrial activities of the Lagoon and the port area of Marghera should be dealt with from an enforced sustainable development approach, and all activities that have a damaging effect on the ecosystem of the property should be eliminated in the long term.

Urban development and large-scale projects remain problematic. No mechanism is in place to assess potential impacts of planned projects/changes in line with Paragraph 118bis, or to notify the World Heritage Centre of proposals according to Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*. As a result, projects are implemented in the property, its future buffer zone and its setting which have negative impacts on the OUV. As an example of the existing problems with governance, no notification was received regarding the LPG storage facility in the property in Chioggia until after its construction. The mission recommended that this facility should be dismantled and moved to an alternative location, and that governance systems for evaluating projects related to the property be revised at all levels. The new legal measures related to construction and operation of LPG storage facilities should be noted with satisfaction.

The mission noted that the recently built 'Hybrid Tower' at Mestre, another planned building in this area, and the 'Venus Venis' hotel planned behind Marghera port highlight the problematic issue of high-rise buildings in the property's setting and future buffer zone. The visual impacts of these planned and implemented projects threaten the property's integrity. It is recommended that the Committee urge the State Party to develop an overall strategy and vision for the protection and preservation of the property's OUV, an Integrated Master Plan for construction projects, including a skyline policy for the property, its future buffer zone and its setting, and mechanisms to comply with the *Operational Guidelines*.

The updating process of the Management Plan should also be noted, as is the intention to integrate the future buffer zone's management into the document. Nonetheless, the mission pointed out that the State Party should ensure that the management system provides an overall strategy/vision for the long-term preservation and protection of the property's OUV, taking into consideration the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. The Management Plan should include essential currently lacking elements, especially an adequate identification of attributes, and enhance the monitoring indicators.

The mission also considered that despite the progress made in several issues identified by the Committee, crucial problems remain unresolved. These pose ascertained significant cumulative threats

to the OUV of the property and include, especially, the complex impacts of mass tourism, the constant decrease of population and the basic deficiencies in governance and cooperated management which have led to a significant loss of historical authenticity within Venice and the other historic centres within the property. These result in harmful effects to the property's inherent characteristics and pose ascertained and potential danger to its OUV and its attributes that convey OUV. The continued deteriorating effects of human intervention, combined with climate change on the vulnerable Lagoon ecosystem, threaten to result in irreversible change. The resolution to these long-standing problems is hindered by a lack of overall vision and low efficiency of the integrated coordinated management on all stakeholder levels. These factors warrant the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Draft Decision: 44 COM 7B.50

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **38 COM 7B.27**, **40 COM 7B.52**, **41 COM 7B.48** and **43 COM 7B.86** adopted at its 38th (Doha, 2014), 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017) and 43rd (Baku, 2019) sessions respectively,*
3. *Notes the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/Ramsar Advisory mission of 2020, which reviewed the progress in implementing previous Committee decisions, and to assess the state of conservation of the property, and the State Party's efforts to start implementing the mission recommendations;*
4. *Also notes that the State Party is working towards refining tourism management tools, improving public spaces and public housing and urges the State Party to work towards a sustainable tourism model for the property and to develop strategies and policies that will result in reducing the number of visitors to the property, in significantly enhancing the quality of life of residents and the requalification of urban areas to their former residential use, as well as in a more diverse resilient economic basis for future of the property and its inhabitants;*
5. *Acknowledges that the State Party started to work on solutions to reroute ships over 40.000 gross tons from the San Marco-Giudecca channel, nevertheless, requests the State Party to search for a long-term solution to this problem with utmost urgency, prioritizing the option to ban these ships from the Lagoon altogether and redirecting them to other, more suitable ports in the region as a final solution;*
6. *Also acknowledges that the Management Plan of the property is being updated, and also urges the State Party to ensure that, in order to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, the updated Management Plan is based on a systematic value assessment, including the identification and mapping of attributes that convey the OUV of the property, and that it will serve as an integrated plan for the property and its planned buffer zone;*
7. *Notes with concern the exceptional high tide events that affected the property at the end of 2019, and commends the joint efforts of the stakeholders, including the local communities, for managing the disaster in an efficient way and taking actions and measures for repairing and mitigating the damage;*
8. *Further acknowledges the efforts of the State Party to work towards the completion and operationalization of the MoSE high tide defense barriers system, and further urges the State Party to monitor closely the impacts of the construction and the operation of the*

system, and to develop appropriate measures for mitigating any negative impacts it might have on the ecosystem of the Lagoon;

9. Also requests the State Party to continue its efforts to mitigate the negative impacts of human interventions in the Lagoon ecosystem in a more strategic and coordinated way, and to develop further measures that will ensure the long-term protection and preservation of this unique and complex environmental area; and therefore, urges furthermore the State Party to progressively eliminate activities in the port of Marghera which have a damaging effect on the ecosystem of the property and implement a sustainable development approach to all future plans;
10. Also notes with concern that currently, there are no adequate mechanisms in place to report planned changes/projects to the World Heritage Centre in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, or to assess their potential impacts to the OUV of the property in line with Paragraph 118bis, and therefore, urges moreover the State Party to:
 - a) Further revise the governance of the property and develop appropriate mechanisms that allow compliance with the Operational Guidelines,
 - b) Develop an overall strategy and vision for the protection and preservation of the property, and ensure its implementation through targeted Action Plans and a revised Road Map,
 - c) Develop an Integrated Master Plan for construction projects, including a skyline policy for the property, its future buffer zone and its setting, in order to protect the property from impacts on its integrity,
 - d) Implement the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape approach in the regional and urban planning,
 - e) Halt all newly proposed large-scale projects within the property and its setting until the above listed measures are put in place,
 - f) Engage in dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies towards developing the proposed measures;
11. Regrets the construction of the liquified petroleum gas (LPG) storage facility in Chioggia within the property that presents an important threat to its OUV, and while noting with satisfaction the new legal measures related to construction and operation of LPG storage facilities, further requests the State Party to dismantle the storage facility in Chioggia and move it to an alternative location outside the property's boundaries;
12. Expresses concerns that despite the progress assessed on several issues identified, crucial problems remain yet unresolved that are already resulting in significant loss of historical authenticity as well as important loss of cultural significance, which are inherent part of the OUV of the property;
13. Considers therefore that the property is faced with ascertained and potential danger due to individual threats and their cumulative impacts and **decides, in conformity with Paragraph 178 of the Operational Guidelines, to inscribe Venice and its Lagoon (Italy) on the List of World Heritage in Danger;**
14. Endorses the key conclusions and recommendations of the 2020 Advisory mission and requests furthermore the State Party to fully implement them;
15. Requests moreover the State Party, to develop a proposal, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, for the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and a set of

corrective measures with a timeframe for their implementation, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 45th session in 2022;

16. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2022, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 45th session in 2022.*

52. Auschwitz Birkenau

German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) (Poland) (C 31)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/31/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 1998-2000)

Total amount approved: USD 30,000

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/31/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: USD 10,000 from Israel

Previous monitoring missions

July 2001: joint Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee/World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; December 2006: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS site visit during the management seminar; May 2007: site management meeting; May 2008 and October 2013: Expert Consultation Group Meetings

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Lack of Management Plan
- Slow process of consultation with local communities
- Ground transport infrastructure

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/31/>

Current conservation issues

On 24 January 2020, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/31/documents> addressing the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee at its 42nd session, as follows:

- A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the construction of the S1 expressway and the south ring road of Oświęcim was carried out in 2018. It was appended to the State Party's report for review. The HIA and report concluded that the potential impact of the S1 expressway and south ring road on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage property will be "negligible, subject to effective limitation by minimizing mechanisms";
- Several appeals against the decision by the Regional Director of Environmental Protection (Katowice Branch) on the environmental conditions for the construction of the S1 expressway and the south ring road of Oświęcim are pending. It is expected that the General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways will announce a construction tender soon;