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**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION
OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**Extended forty-fifth session
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
10-25 September 2023**

**Item 7B of the Provisional Agenda:
State of conservation of properties inscribed
on the of World Heritage List**

Summary

This document contains information on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Committee is requested to review the reports on the state of conservation of properties contained in this document. The full reports of Reactive Monitoring missions requested by the World Heritage Committee are available at the following Web address in their original language: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/45COM/documents>

All previous state of conservation reports will be available through the World Heritage State of conservation Information System at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>

Decision required: The World Heritage Committee may wish to adopt the draft Decision presented at the end of each state of conservation report.

Note: For each section, the reports are presented in the English alphabetical order of States Parties

189. 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 <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://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, high-rise buildings 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 <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/>

Current conservation issues

On 30 November 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/documents/>. In addition to responding to Decision **44 COM 7B.50**, the document refers to actions related to the implementation of the recommendations of the 2020 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/RAMSAR Advisory mission. The report provides information on the following:

- Several projects are underway or have been implemented in relation to urban redevelopment, regeneration (including cultural heritage conservation) and social cohesion;
- A specific high-water barrier has been constructed to protect the San Marco's Basilica, and the 'elevation of the entire San Marco insula' is planned;
- Progress has been made in enhancing tourism management tools, public urban spaces and housing opportunities for residents;
- The banning of large ships from the San Marco Basin – Giudecca canal is still in force. Three temporary landing stages have been built for large passenger ships in the Marghera area, and an additional landing stage is underway in Chioggia. Ships now use the Malamocco – Marghera channel to enter the Lagoon, for which a study is underway to assess the environmental impact of boat traffic;

- The port authority has launched an open competition for proposals and projects related to the construction and management of docking points outside the Lagoon, which can be used by passenger ships of more than 40,000 gross tons and container ships used for transoceanic transport;
- The update of the Management Plan is still in progress and was reportedly expected to be completed by spring 2023. Issues related to the governance and management system of the property and the establishment of a buffer zone are to be addressed in this context;
- Recovery interventions after the exceptional high tide in November 2019 continue. While the risk prevention system is improving, more frequent and higher magnitude high tide events have been recorded (on 22 November 2022, the highest level of the Adriatic Sea in history was recorded);
- The MoSE System is operational (it was used in 20 cases in 2021-2022) but is still not completed. Modernization and maintenance work are still needed to make the system fully functioning. A managing authority is to be appointed in the future. Environmental compensation interventions are planned;
- The 'Morphological Plan of the Venice Lagoon' and the related 'Sludge Protocol' are still being updated. Within the Metropolitan City of Venice, eight municipalities linked to the property have approved their 'Water Protection Plans';
- A 'Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan' for the City of Venice is being finalised and will be sent to the World Heritage Centre before its completion. Similar documents have already been developed for six municipalities linked to the property and for several more in its wider setting;
- Initiatives and projects are planned or being implemented to improve the ecosystem of the Lagoon, including initiatives to introduce innovative and sustainable industrial activities in the Marghera port area;
- The Municipality of Venice and the Ministry of Culture have launched a project to develop a World Heritage-focused Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for plans and projects, and consultation sessions among the main stakeholders have already started. The list of interventions to be submitted to the HIA was confirmed in November 2022 and the HIAs are reportedly expected to be completed in spring 2023 and shared with the World Heritage Centre. This process should also facilitate the development of the pending Integrated Master Plan and the skyline policy. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) transpose the specific EU directives on EIAs and SEAs, and plans/projects are regularly subjected to these based on regulation by the competent bodies at national, regional and local levels, depending on the type of plan/project;
- Following the prohibition on the construction of new liquified petroleum gas (LPG) storage facilities, legal regulations have been issued to provide compensation for projects already authorised. These measures will extend to the owner of the LPG storage facility in Chioggia;
- A table is provided in annex to the report with corrective measures suggested by the State Party, with a timetable for implementation;
- A note is provided by 'SAVE SpA', the operator of the Marco Polo International Airport in Venice, as an annex to the report, expressing objections to the relevant findings and recommendations of the 2015 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/RAMSAR Reactive Monitoring mission and the 2020 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/RAMSAR Advisory mission.

Following the last session of the Committee in which the Committee requested the State Party to '... develop a proposal on a set of corrective measures with a timeframe for their implementation, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session,' (Decision **44 COM 7B.50**) in the course of 2021-2022, the World Heritage Centre (in its letters dated 29 September 2021, 28 June and 20 December 2022) repeatedly requested updates from the State and offered its assistance in the development of the corrective measures. The World Heritage Centre also transmitted third party information on planned projects within the property and its wider setting that might have a negative impact on its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The State Party did not respond to the invitation to collaborate in the elaboration of the corrective measures and, in response to the various correspondence from the World Heritage Centre, provided a brief report on 14 February 2023, in which it informs that the project for the transformation of historic buildings on the island of San Pietro di Castello, which has been the subject

of concerns from third parties, is not currently approved, and that the proposed projects for a new railway line to Venice airport, a new intermodal land-water terminal for fast boats connecting the islands of Burano-Mazzorbo-Torcello to the mainland, two new arrival platforms in Venice at San Giuliano and Pili, and a high-rise building project in Mestre are all currently undergoing assessment through an HIA.

The State Party provided updated information to the World Heritage Centre on 26 April 2023, confirming that a decision had been taken to dismantle the LPG storage facility in Chioggia and that a HIA procedure was still ongoing for 12 projects at different stages of planning, including some of which have received planning approval, situated within the property and its wider setting.

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

The State Party reports progress on several issues of concern to the Committee, as well as efforts to start implementing several of the recommendations of the 2020 Advisory mission. The cultural heritage conservation activities should be acknowledged, as well as the completion of the works on the temporary barriers to protect the San Marco Basilica and the surrounding area from high-water occurrences which are not managed by the MoSE. The State Party should be requested to provide the World Heritage Centre with detailed documentation on the works planned to elevate the entire San Marco insula.

The reported achievements related to sustainable tourism management by regulatory changes and management tools are positive, but the efficiency of the progress made (especially in reducing the outstanding number of tourists in the property) seems to be low or unknown.

The continued ban on large ships in the San Marco basin - Giudecca canal is appropriate, and the search for new options should be noted. The Committee should request that the result of related studies (on the environmental impacts of large ships passing through the Malamocco-Marghera canal) and the outcome of the competition (for docking points outside the Lagoon for large passenger ships and container ships) be sent to the World Heritage Centre for review and comments by the Advisory Bodies before irreversible decisions are made.

The continued recovery work following the exceptional high tide in November 2019 should be noted with satisfaction. Efforts related to the creation and reinforcement of tide barriers and the reconstruction and consolidation of beaches and coastal dunes should be also noted, as should the development of advanced tidal forecasting technology. Nevertheless, the State Party should be encouraged to continue research into the evaluation of existing, predicting and modelling of future phenomena related to climate change and its current and potential impacts on the OUV of the property. In this regard, the works to make the MoSE system fully operational and to ensure its long-term operation and maintenance should be paired, as requested by the Committee, with close monitoring (jointly by all relevant stakeholders) of the impacts of the construction and operation of the system, and the continued development of appropriate measures to mitigate any negative impacts it might have on the ecosystem of the Lagoon. In this respect, the Committee should confirm that details of the monitoring, action plans and documents relating to the morphological conditions of the Lagoon, sustainable energy use and impacts of climate change, are all still awaited by the World Heritage Centre.

Improved coordination between the different stakeholders managing the property is also noted, as well as the availability of financial resources (mostly earmarked or project-based) dedicated to enhancing the protection and management of the property, including the ecosystem of the Lagoon, and to improving the ecological condition and reducing the polluting emissions of the industrial area of Marghera.

The efforts of the State Party to update the Management Plan and make it an integrated plan for the property can be acknowledged. The plan should also include measures for the future buffer zone, and, on completions of its final draft, it should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to adoption so that the resulting recommendations can be reflected in its final version. The State Party should also again be urged to resubmit a revised minor boundary modification request (responding to the requests made by the Committee in its Decision **43 COM 8B.46**) for the establishment of a buffer zone. It is, however, to be noted that while the State Party reports improvements (resources allocated, projects and measures planned or implemented) on outstanding issues examined by the Committee, it is often unclear whether these apply to the World Heritage property or, in general, to the Metropolitan City of Venice (which comprises 43 municipalities, nine of which are directly linked to the area of the World Heritage property).

Information related to the proposed development of World Heritage focused HIAs for a range of interventions should be acknowledged. However, it is observed that the State Party is unable to fully comply with the Committee's request to halt all newly proposed large-scale projects within the property and its setting until a set of measures related to planning, management and governance are put in place

as some of these projects have already been approved. In addition, regarding the evaluation of impacts of developments and changes, the State Party needs to be reminded to integrate measures that ensure the protection and preservation of the OUV of the property in the EIA and SEA processes and be urged to give priority to the finalisation of the property's Management, the Integrated Master Plan, and the skyline policy, which need to support decision-making and guide any future development. Specific World Heritage focused impact assessments need to be carried out if no other impact assessment procedure is in place to consider the impacts of planned or proposed projects (within the property and its wider setting) on the OUV. Finally, it is of concern that the State Party has not been communicating in a sustained and substantive manner with the World Heritage Centre between the last Committee session in 2021 and the submission of its state of conservation report in 2022, as requested by the Committee, and that it did not engage in consultation to developing the corrective measures. The proposed corrective measures, as annexed to the state of conservation report submitted by the State Party, are currently insufficient and not detailed enough and should be subject to further discussions and exchanges.

The effects of the continuing deterioration due to human intervention, including continuing development, the impacts of climate change and mass tourism threaten to cause irreversible changes to the OUV of the property. Some of these long-standing issues have already led to the deterioration of the inherent characteristics of the property and its attributes, especially related to its cultural and social identity and integrity. Implemented and planned small- and large-scale changes, developments, particularly high-rise buildings which occur predominantly within in the wider setting of the property (in its potential future buffer zone), are likely to have significant negative visual impact on the integrity of the property. Moreover, the combined effects of human induced and natural changes (due to sea level rise, extreme weather events and other climate change induced phenomena) are causing deterioration and damage to build structures and urban areas, and threaten the integrity of the cultural, environmental and landscape attributes and values of the property. Many of these issues, which individually represent threats to the OUV of the property, but which also have a cumulative adverse impact, remain unresolved or only temporarily addressed. This is demonstrated by the lack of significant progress in addressing the complex issues affecting the property as evidenced by the limited reported achievements in implementing the Committee's decisions and past mission recommendations. The resolution of these long-standing but urgent issues is further hindered by a lack of overall joint strategic vision for the long-term preservation of the property and low effectiveness of integrated coordinated management at all stakeholder levels. All these factors combined lead the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to maintain their view that the property continues to face ascertained and potential danger as defined in paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines, and therefore, recommends its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. It is hoped that such inscription will result in greater dedication and mobilisation of local, national and international stakeholders, for the development of effective and sustainable corrective measures that address these long-standing issues.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.189

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **38 COM 7B.27**, **40 COM 7B.52**, **41 COM 7B.48**, **43 COM 7B.86**, **43 COM 8B.46** and **44 COM 7B.50** adopted at its 38th (Doha, 2014), 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 43rd (Baku, 2019), and extended 44th (Fuzhou/Online, 2021) sessions respectively,*
3. *Acknowledges the State Party's efforts to implement previous Committee decisions and several of the 2020 mission recommendations, including:*
 - a) *Continuing enhancing tourism management tools, public spaces, and public housing possibilities,*

- b) *Improving coordination between the different stakeholders to enhance the protection of the ecosystem of the Lagoon and reduce the polluting emissions from the industrial area of Marghera,*
 - c) *Creating and reinforcing tide barriers, and the reconstruction and consolidation of beaches and coastal dunes, as well as the development of advanced tidal forecasting technology,*
 - d) *Reconfirmation of the ban on large ships from the San Marco Basin - Giudecca Canal and the continuing efforts to find new options for docking large ships outside the Lagoon,*
 - e) *Still ongoing update of the Management Plan, as well as the development of World Heritage-focused Heritage Impact Assessments for a set of projects;*
4. *Considers nevertheless that significant progress still needs to be made by the State Party in addressing ascertained and potential dangers due to individual threats and their cumulative impact, and therefore requests the State Party, as a matter of priority, to:*
- a) *Continue research on the evaluation of existing phenomena, prediction and modelling of future phenomena related to climate change and its current and potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and develop related action plans,*
 - b) *Fully complete and operationalise the MoSE system and ensure its long-term management and maintenance including through establishing with urgency the proposed management authority,*
 - c) *Ensure close joint monitoring by all relevant stakeholders of the impacts of the MoSE system (construction and operation), and continue developing appropriate measures to mitigate any negative impacts it might have on the ecosystem of the Lagoon,*
 - d) *Submit the results of related studies on the environmental impact of large ships passing through the Malamocco-Marghera canal and the competition for docking points outside the Lagoon for large passenger ships and container ships to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before irreversible decisions are made, furthermore, to continue to prioritise the option of redirecting large ships to other more suitable ports in the region as a final solution,*
 - e) *Continue submitting action plans and documents related to the morphological conditions of the Lagoon and sustainable energy use to the World Heritage Centre for review and comments by the Advisory Bodies*
 - f) *Continue working towards a sustainable tourism model for the property and developing efficient strategies and measures that will reduce the exceptionally high number of visitors to the property, significantly improve the quality of life of the residents and the requalification of urban areas to their former residential use, as well as creating a more diverse resilient economic basis for future of the property and its inhabitants;*
5. *Also notes the information provided on the construction of temporary barriers to protect the San Marco Basilica and the surrounding area from the high-water phenomena not managed by the MoSE, and furthermore requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, as soon as possible, detailed documentation on the works planned to elevate the entire San Marco insula, for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to any irreversible decision being taken and implemented;*
6. *Also considers that a strategic long-term vision for the long-term preservation of the property has yet to be established, and that integrated coordinated management at all*

stakeholder-levels needs to be further strengthened, and therefore urges the State Party to:

- a) *Finalise the updating of the Management Plan with adequate measures for the future buffer zone as well, and develop in parallel an Integrated Master Plan and a skyline policy for the property,*
 - b) *Integrate measures in line with Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines that ensure the protection and preservation of the OUV of the property in the planning, Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment processes, and ensure that specific World Heritage-focused impact assessments are carried out if no other impact assessment procedures are in place to consider the impacts of planned or proposed projects within the property and its wider setting,*
 - c) *Establish processes in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for submitting planned/proposed changes and projects to the World Heritage Centre in a timely manner for review by the Advisory Bodies and ensure that impact assessment processes and the Management Plan support the relevant decision-making,*
 - d) *Resubmit a revised minor boundary modification request for the establishment of a buffer zone, responding to the requests made in previous Committee decisions;*
7. *Further considers that reported large scale development projects that are currently being investigated for implementation in the property hold potential, individually and cumulatively, to have an adverse impact on the OUV of the property, and therefore expresses concern that these projects, when implemented, will add to the continuing deterioration effects of human intervention, climate change impacts and mass tourism, which threaten to result in irreversible change, and substantial loss of historical authenticity and cultural significance, which are an integral part of the OUV of the property;*
8. *Regrets that the reported achievements in the implementation of previous Committee decisions and mission recommendations do not reflect a significant level of progress in addressing the persistent and complex issues related in particular to mass tourism, development projects and climate change, which are causing deterioration and damage to building structures and urban areas, degrading the cultural and social identity of the property and threatening the integrity of its cultural, environmental and landscape attributes and values, therefore considers that the property continues to face ascertained and potential danger from individual threats and their cumulative impacts which together have deleterious effects on the inherent characteristics of the property, **decides, in accordance with Paragraphs 177 and 179 of the Operational Guidelines, to inscribe Venice and its Lagoon (Italy) on the List of World Heritage in Danger and calls on** the State Party to ensure the utmost dedication and joint efforts of local, national and international stakeholders to address these long-standing problems in an effective and sustainable manner;*
9. *Further considers that the corrective measures proposed by the State Party are still insufficient and need to be further developed, and therefore also urges the State Party to establish, while continuing to implement previous Committee decisions and recommendations of the 2020 Advisory mission, a structured consultation process with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop a proposal for the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and an adequate set of corrective measures with a timetable for their implementation, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session;*

10. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, and specifically a progress report on the development of the DSOCR and the revised set of corrective measures for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.

190. City of Valletta (Malta) (C 131)

See Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2

191. Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor (Montenegro) (C 125ter)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (i)(ii)(iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1979-2003

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/125/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 1979-1982)

Total amount approved: USD 70,000

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/125/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

2003: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission; January 2006: Management Planning Course; February 2008: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission; March 2013: ICOMOS Advisory mission; October-November 2018: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Earthquake damage (*issue resolved*)
- Lack of Management System/Management Plan
- Inadequate legal framework
- Building and development (accelerated urban development and urban pressure)
- Ground transportation infrastructure (proposed major bridge at Verige and other proposed development projects)
- Lack of buffer zone (*issue resolved*)
- Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure
- Land conversion
- Society's valuing of heritage
- Changes in traditional ways of life and knowledge system
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/125/>

Current conservation issues

On 8 December 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/125/documents/> and presents the following progress: