

Lübeck Declaration

Conference “UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Europe – A Network for Cultural Dialogue and Cultural Tourism”, 13 and 14 June 2007, Lübeck, Germany

We, the participants of the conference, representatives of World Heritage sites, of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, of National Commissions for UNESCO, and experts in support of World Heritage,

welcome the opportunity to exchange information, ideas and best practices on World Heritage at international level,

acknowledge UNESCO's *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (World Heritage Convention) of 1972 as an effective and universally accepted instrument for the protection of humankind's cultural and natural heritage and for enhancing intercultural dialogue and cooperation,

welcome the pledge made by the States Parties adhered to the World Heritage Convention to jointly bear responsibility for the continued protection of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and of those proposed for inscription thereon, and to be accountable to the international community for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention,

recognize the role that world cultural and natural heritage plays in the life and development of societies,

emphasize that tourism at World Heritage sites needs to be sustainable so as to ensure the long-term protection and avoid irreversible damage to the sites,

acknowledge sustainable tourism as a means of investing in World Heritage sites and enabling people to experience the authentic places of the world's cultural and natural heritage,

emphasize the role the World Heritage Convention plays in expanding nation-bound conceptions of cultural identity towards a universal, human and intercultural understanding of cultural and natural heritage,

recognize the significant role World Heritage sites could play in the European integration process by enabling the people of Europe to understand and experience their common history reflected in this heritage and its relation to other regions of the world,

state that communication and cooperation between World Heritage stakeholders and partners in Europe and beyond needs to be further improved, and that a more regular and better coordinated dialogue and exchange of expertise is crucial to fulfilling the mandate laid down in the World Heritage Convention.

Participants of the conference call on

(1) States Parties to the World Heritage Convention,

- a) to continue to support the maintenance and conservation of World Heritage sites in a targeted manner, and to provide increased support to World Heritage sites in developing countries and in particular to those under threat in the framework of economic cooperation and development,
- b) to ensure the establishment of mechanisms that enhance the protection of World Heritage sites in urban development in accordance with international charters recognized by UNESCO, to ensure the sites' protection in rural development, and to prevent them from threats caused e.g. by ill planned tourism development, construction or resource extraction,

(2) the World Heritage Committee,

to establish, responding to a growing need, an effective mechanism for a more structured and continuous dialogue between the Committee and those World Heritage sites that need timely guidance in conflict management processes,

(3) UNESCO,

- a) to ensure the scientific and practical exchange between experts in World Heritage by making use of existing networks and by further developing the "periodic reporting" as a valuable instrument for recording the sites' state of conservation and for assessing whether World Heritage values of the properties inscribed are being maintained over time,
- b) to ensure coordination with other international legal instruments and tools for the conservation and safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage,
- c) to inform the World Heritage Committee on the Lübeck Declaration,

(4) National Commissions for UNESCO,

- a) to convene stakeholders in World Heritage from Europe and beyond in regular intervals for an exchange of ideas and best practices,
- b) to provide support for strengthening interdisciplinary cooperation in regard to World Heritage and to convene relevant stakeholders at national level in regular intervals,
- c) to invite World Heritage sites in their respective countries to celebrate, where appropriate, a World Heritage Day on the first Sunday of June each year in order to raise awareness for the World Heritage Convention among the broad public,
- d) to assist World Heritage sites in further developing their educational role through closer cooperation with universities and schools, e.g. the UNESCO Associated Schools, and to further develop transnational school twinning arrangements between schools located at World Heritage sites,

(5) representatives of World Heritage sites,

- a) to expand initiatives of transnational cooperation between World Heritage sites, and to develop thematic site twinning and site networks in Europe and beyond,

- b) to further proceed with the nomination of a coordinator for each site to improve management of the sites and the consultation process with all stakeholders involved,
- c) to develop, implement and regularly revise management plans for all sites so as to ensure the protection and the maintenance of the sites as a contribution to sustainable development, also taking into account the emerging threat of impacts related to climate change,
- d) to establish effective mechanisms and tourism planning models as well as codes of conduct in cooperation with the tourism industry in order to ensure the protection of World Heritage sites from uncontrolled tourist exploitation,
- e) to reinforce the involvement of civil society, especially the younger generation, in support of World Heritage and the identification of citizens with their own heritage through the creation of local World Heritage associations, foundations and groups and further to encourage international partnerships regarding World Heritage,
- f) to further improve our knowledge of the specific values of cultural landscapes as developing sites and to communicate them to visitors and to the public,

(6) the European Union,

- a) to support European cooperation in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and to foster networks and twinning arrangements between European World Heritage sites,
- b) to contribute to an intensified communication and cooperation of European stakeholders in World Heritage,
- c) to consider applying EU-standards and regulations regarding construction and construction materials to World Heritage sites in conformity with the values laid down in the World Heritage Convention and allow, where appropriate, the possibility of derogations for World Heritage sites,

(7) the Council of Europe,

following the European World Heritage Periodic Report 2005/2006 to enhance cooperation with UNESCO regarding World Heritage,

(8) the Tourism Industry,

- a) to benefit from a closer cooperation with heritage experts to enhance the visitors' experience at the world's cultural and natural heritage in a sustainable manner,
- b) to ensure a sustainable tourism as defined by the World Tourism Organization so as to guarantee the long-term protection of World Heritage sites,
- c) to establish and implement partnership models that ensure a contribution of tourism to the conservation costs of World Heritage sites,
- d) to design and implement tourism policies and activities in World Heritage sites with the involvement and participation of local communities and to ensure better information and a respectful approach of tourists towards local inhabitants,

- e) to encourage awareness-raising programmes amongst tourists regarding the value of heritage and the sensitivities of its operations and management,

(9) the people,

to visit and enjoy and to learn more about the World Heritage which, in the end, belongs to all of us.

Participants of the conference,

thank the German Commission for UNESCO and the German UNESCO World Heritage Sites Association for organizing this conference and state that a meeting of World Heritage stakeholders at European level should from now on take place in regular intervals.

Background

The 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage', adopted by UNESCO in 1972, has hitherto been signed by 184 states. Over 800 sites from more than 130 countries are represented on the World Heritage List and enjoy the protection of the international community as well as the particular attention of the general public worldwide. The World Heritage Convention has made a contribution – through its forward-looking idea of the common responsibility of the international community for the outstanding cultural and natural sites on this earth – to the creation of a border-crossing recognition of universal cultural values.

In the current debate on the significance of the cultural and natural heritage of the earth, it is being stressed that besides being maintained and protected, the World Heritage sites have an important role to play

- *as an indispensable resource for understanding and vividly experiencing the common history of humankind, as a tangible testament to the diversity and value of past and present cultures, and as places for encountering foreign cultures,*
- *as a reflection of human creativity and stimulus for a humane and peaceful way of life in the societies of today and the future,*
- *as places where the term 'World Heritage' expands nation-bound conceptions of cultural identity towards a universal, human and intercultural understanding of cultural and natural heritage,*
- *as places of education, where children and young people can experience, creatively fashion and learn to gain intercultural access to their own history, to the history of other peoples and the history of the world.*