

1. 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: more than 1,500 projects worth over 50 million euro.

Previous monitoring missions

October 2015: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/RAMSAR Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Concern over the announcement of a universal exhibition in Venice (issue resolved)
- Proposals for large infrastructure, navigation and construction projects (including new off-shore platform, new terminals, tourist port and large leisure facilities) in the Lagoon and its immediate setting
- Potential negative environmental impacts triggered by motor boats, cruise ships and oil tankers

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

Conservation issues presented to the World Heritage Committee in 2016

On 30 January and on 1 December 2015, the State Party submitted a progress report on the state of conservation of the property and a state of conservation report on the implementation of the Committee's decision, both available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/documents/>. The state of conservation report reflects the contributions of the 21 authorities involved in the management of the property, through its Steering Committee, informing that:

- The role, means and resources of the Steering Committee and the Management Plan 2012-2018 require strengthening through changes to the Special Law of Venice and Statute of the Venice Metropolitan City, taking into account the need to preserve the City of Venice and to ensure adequate living conditions for its inhabitants;
- A number of large scale infrastructure works are being implemented or planned, and these are subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures by the Ministry of the Environment Land and Sea. Information has been provided on these projects, and funding has been allocated for Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), which will occur in 2016;
- The impact of boats and shipping is acknowledged and new measures to manage water traffic, including a 'Lagoon Vessel Traffic Service System' are being implemented, as well as self-imposed limits of 96,000 tonnes by cruise companies, following the removal of vessel size limits. Oil tankers still pass through the Lagoon, but their numbers have reduced from the level at the time the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List; options for addressing the effects of large-scale shipping are limited by available alternatives;
- The City of Venice and the Management Plan recognize increasing tourism as a 'macro-emergency' and the need for a sustainable strategy to reduce tourism pressure and create visitor awareness, and the gathering of visitor data is proceeding;
- The buffer zone for the property is being further developed prior to further consultation.

As requested by the World Heritage Committee, during its 38th session (Doha, 2014), a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/RAMSAR Reactive Monitoring mission to the property was invited by the State Party and was carried out from 13 to 18 October 2015. The report of the mission will be available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/documents/>.

While the mission noted considerable progress achieved with the development of an integrated management plan and the creation of a Steering Committee, it concluded that large-scale development proposals for infrastructure, navigation and construction projects in the Lagoon and its immediate setting, could lead to irreversible changes to the overall relationship between the City and its Lagoon, particularly in combination with the developments and transformations that have already occurred in the urban settlements of the historic city since the inscription of the property.

The mission expressed its concern about the extensive traffic and inappropriate exploitation of the Lagoon resources which could contribute to its severe deterioration, if no immediate measures are taken by the authorities.

The mission noted that the relationship between the capacity of the city, the number of its inhabitants and the number of tourists is out of balance and causing significant damage to building fabric and the cultural context, particularly through conversion of residences for tourist accommodation. There is also a lack of building maintenance.

The mission discussed with national and local authorities appropriate short-, mid- and long-term measures which might be recommended for implementation in order to address the potential threats, as well as to protect all attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property.

On the basis of assessment of the overall state of conservation of the property and analysis of the planning situation for all major development projects in the property and its setting, the mission developed its recommendations presented in the report. The mission considered that the state of conservation of the property is impacted upon by the factors which are affecting, or have the potential to affect, its OUV, in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the *Operational Guidelines*, and make its authenticity and integrity highly vulnerable.

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

In the Management Plan 2012-2018, the State Party recognizes that: *'the ancient city is now threatened both by material factors that risk jeopardizing the objectives of physical conservation – abandon or its opposite, excessive wear, wave motion, high tides – and by other intangible factors arising from the way the city is used'*. It is noted that the mission found this statement to be alarmingly accurate.

It is concluded that a combination of constructions and transformations that have already occurred in the settlements of the historic city, together with proposed major development projects around the Lagoon, including an airport extension, dredging of new deep-water navigation waterways, new port terminals (oil and gas, container, cruise passengers), and ongoing conversion of buildings for tourism purposes, have the capacity to irreversibly damage the OUV of the property. This damage would include serious deterioration of the eco and cultural systems of the Lagoon as well as the architectural and town-planning coherence of the historic city, resulting in substantive loss of its authenticity and integrity.

Although progress has been made with an integrated approach to the management of the Lagoon as an ecosystem upon which the human activities and settlements depend, there is a wider lack of coordination between cultural and natural aspects of the overall property. Substantial intervention plans for the Lagoon, including related projects for different ports may result in adverse effects on both the ecosystem and cultural values of the property. The artificial flood gates (MoSE) may need to be adapted following initial operations, according to new information and a growing understanding of rapid environmental change triggered by climate change and sea-level rise.

In view of these major adverse consequences for the Lagoon and its eco and cultural systems, longer term solutions need to be considered as a matter of urgency, based on integrated modelling, and thorough assessments of the likely consequences of the various projects on the eco-system of the Lagoon and the overall OUV of the property.

The property requires an immediate improvement to the planning tools available through the creation of an integrated strategy for all on-going and planned developments within the property, a three-dimensional morphological model and a sustainable tourism strategy, all of which should be reflected in an updated Management Plan. This revised planning approach should also be founded on a shared vision of authorities and stakeholders which affords priority to sustaining the OUV of the property and its landscape and seascape setting.

It is recommended that the State Party put in place all necessary strategic, planning and management frameworks, to enforce, as short-term measures, speed limits and regulation of the number and type of boats entering the Lagoon, in view to prohibit, in future, the largest ships and tankers entering the Lagoon, as already recommended by the Committee. Moreover, permits for all new projects should be halted, prior to the mid-term assessment of the Management Plan, and prior to submission of details of proposed developments, together with HIAs and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), to the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

It is therefore recommended that the State Party implement all urgent measures highlighted in the mission report and submit to the World Heritage Committee a detailed state of conservation report by 1 February 2017 in view, if no substantial progress is accomplished by the State Party until then, that the Committee consider inscribing the property on the List of the World Heritage in Danger at its 41st session in 2017.

Draft Decision: 40 COM 7B.52

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **38 COM 7B.27**, adopted at its 38th session (Doha, 2014),
3. Expresses its extreme concern that the combination of previous developments, ongoing transformations and proposed projects within the property which are threatening serious deterioration of the eco and cultural systems of the Lagoon and irreversible changes to the overall relationship between the City and its Lagoon, as well as the loss of architectural and town-planning coherence of the historic city, all of which would lead to substantive and irreversible loss of authenticity and integrity;
4. Considers that the property requires an immediate improvement to the planning tools available through the creation of:
 1. an integrated strategy for all on-going and planned developments within the property,
 2. a three-dimensional morphological model and
 3. a sustainable tourism strategy,all of which should be reflected in an updated Management Plan for the property; this revised planning approach should also be founded on a shared vision of authorities and stakeholders which affords priority to sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and its landscape and seascape setting;
5. Reiterates its request to the State Party to enforce speed limits and regulate the number and type of boats in the Lagoon and in the canals;
6. Also reiterates its request to the State Party to adopt, as a matter of urgency, a legal document introducing prohibition of the largest ships and tankers to enter the Lagoon and requests the State Party to put in place all necessary strategic, planning and management frameworks to this end;
7. Also requests the State Party to halt all new projects within the property, prior to the mid-term assessment of the Management Plan, and the submission of details of proposed developments, together with Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), to the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, for review by the Advisory Bodies;
8. Endorses the recommendations of the 2015 mission and further requests the State Party to fully implement these recommendations;
9. Requests furthermore the State Party to revise the proposed buffer zone for the property in line with the ICOMOS technical review and submit it to the World Heritage Centre as a minor boundary modification, by **1 December 2016**, for examination by the Committee at its 41st session in 2017;
10. Finally requests that the State Party implement all urgent measures highlighted in the mission report and submit to the World Heritage Committee a detailed report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, by **1 February 2017** for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017, **with a view, if no substantial progress is accomplished by the State Party until then, to consider inscribing the property on the List of the World Heritage in Danger.**