

State of conservation of World Heritage properties  
Inscribed on the World Heritage List

WHC-11/35.COM/7B, p. 195

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List  
1994

Criteria  
(ii) (iv)

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

Previous Committee Decisions  
30 COM 7B.86; 32 COM 7B.99; 33 COM 7B.112

International Assistance:  
Total amount provided to the property: USD 114,550, including organization of training workshops by ICCROM

UNESCO extra-budgetary funds  
Total amount provided to the property: Within the framework of the Revitalization Strategy for Vilnius, UNDP – SPPD provided USD 64,000

Previous monitoring missions  
1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000: World Heritage Centre project missions; May 2005: World Heritage Centre site visit; December 2006: on-site regional seminar

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports  
a) High-rise buildings which have an impact on the visual integrity of the property;  
b) Lack of an integrated management plan/system;  
c) Need for adequate legal protection.

Illustrative material  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/541>

#### Current conservation issues

The State Party submitted a state of conservation report, received on 11 February 2011, including the following documents that have been approved by the relevant government bodies: “General guidelines for Management System of the Outstanding Universal Value of Vilnius Historic Centre - a World Heritage site” and “Special Plan of Immovable Heritage Protection for Boundaries of the Area of Vilnius Old Town and its Buffer Zone”.

#### *a) Legal protection*

At the request of the Committee, the State Party indicates four main laws related to the protection of the Vilnius Historic Centre: Law on Protection of Immovable Cultural Heritage (1995), Law on State Commission of Cultural Heritage (2005), Law on Protected Area (1993) and Law on Territorial Planning (1995). The Ministry of Culture of Lithuania has also approved a “Regulation on the Protection of the Vilnius Old Town” (2003) which defines the framework and modalities for the maintenance, use and management of the Old Town. The State Party also lists a number of laws which have an indirect impact on the property including its movable heritage, traditional cultural expressions, environment and construction.

#### *b) Integrated management plan/system;*

The report of the State Party makes clear that there are a number of different laws and planning mechanisms which have a role in the management of the Vilnius Old Town. In response to requests by the World Heritage Committee, the State Party has submitted a document which outlines a set of guidelines meant to coordinate and integrate the various institutions and organizations which have a role in the management of the Vilnius Old Town.

The setting up of a “Commission for supervision of the site values and coordination and integration of management of the site” is central to the guidelines. This commission is meant to ensure territorial integration; horizontal, inter-institutional and multidisciplinary integration;

vertical coherence of management; and coherence between state institutions, local government and civil society. The composition of this commission includes the state authority, other state institutions with activities that are related to the site and can influence changes to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and non-governmental bodies in the field of science and education, as well as interested civil society organizations. The commission is meant to meet at least every three months in order to review activities carried out in the preceding three months, monitor and evaluate problems/impacts on the property, and develop annual actions plans to solve problems or minimize their impact. The commission is also meant to prepare annual reports and also link to the World Heritage Periodic Reporting process. One of the first tasks of the Commission will be the review of the Vilnius Old Town Revitalization Strategy. The report also states that the Ministry of Culture and the municipal government will begin consultations on the integrated management of the property in February 2011. A Special Protection Plan for the Boundaries of the Area of Vilnius Old Town and its buffer zone was approved in 2010.

c) *High rise buildings which have an impact on the visual integrity of the property*

The State Party states that the Vilnius Official (Master) Plan regulates visual impacts, including the height of the buildings in the buffer zone. This plan is meant to ensure the retention of visual relationships among protected areas, valuable views, panoramas, and silhouettes, by capping the height of new buildings and the ratio of buildings to open space. The plan also prescribes that new constructions are banned except for those, which contribute to the reading of the urban plan or spatial structure, or are based on traditional principles of spatial form. For new constructions, an analysis of their visual impact on the protected area has to be carried out before they are approved.

d) *Statement of Outstanding Universal Value*

As requested by the Committee the State Party report includes a draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value which has been transmitted to ICOMOS for review.

e) *Minor boundary modification*

The State Party submitted a map and a text containing precisions of the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone, as a part of the state of conservation report. It has not, however, submitted these to the World Heritage Centre by the 1 February 2011 deadline for a minor modification of the boundaries and buffer zone of the property and according to the submission format already transmitted to the State Party in 2008.

### Conclusions

The World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies take note of the information provided on the legal framework. However, as the World Heritage Committee noted in its decision taken at its 33rd session, the planned "Commission for supervision of the site values and coordination and integration of management of the site" is essential to ensure an integrated management system that will allow the legal framework to effectively protect the property. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies note, however, that very little progress seems to have been made in setting up this commission since the 2009 State Party's report. This new commission seems not to have begun its work, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, nor have a clear set of conservation objectives and decision-making processes and procedures been developed. Furthermore, there seems to be no additional information as to which institutions at the national and municipal levels, and civil society will be taking part in the commission. This commission should begin its work as soon as possible with clear objectives and procedures, to ensure that it is in a position to effectively control any activities or interventions which might have an impact on the OUV of the property.

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In regard to the issue of high-rise buildings, while the State Party report refers to constructions in the proposed buffer zone, there is no additional information to discuss those high-rise buildings which are located outside the proposed buffer zone but may have an impact on the OUV of the property. It would be useful if the State Party develops a strategy for heritage impact assessment to ensure that large constructions, regardless of their location, do not have a negative impact on the OUV.

In regard to the proposed minor modifications to the boundaries and proposed buffer zones of the property, the World Heritage Centre has sent a letter to the State Party asking it to officially submit the request for minor boundary modifications at its earliest possible convenience.