



Call for papers

50 Years of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention

Achievements and Challenges in Europe

International conference | Kraków, 8–10 June 2022

Organizers: the Polish ICOMOS Committee & the International Cultural Centre

Venue: International Cultural Centre in Kraków, Rynek Główny 25

Host city: Kraków



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50 Years of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention Achievements and Challenges in Europe

The year 2022 sees the 50th anniversary of the adoption by the UNESCO General Conference of the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Over the course of that half-century, this project has proven to be the greatest global success of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The countries of Europe were among the first to ratify the convention, and 3 of the first 12 assets inscribed on the UNESCO list in 1978 were in Europe, one of them being Kraków. Today, of the more than 1,100 world heritage assets it protects, almost 40 per cent are European. This means that hundreds of Europe's most precious cultural assets have been recognized as global heritage, and nearly 1,000 more are on their countries' tentative lists. This reflects the extensive scale of European countries' active participation in the World Heritage system, and has ensured that Europe's most valuable heritage has the status of UNESCO World Heritage.

But the importance of the UNESCO World Heritage movement extends far beyond the monuments and sites inscribed on the list. One notable achievement of the convention is its reach: it has been adopted by more states than are members of the UN. From the perspective of protection of all heritage, what is of greatest significance is improving methods for analysis and forms of protection of World Heritage assets, and disseminating these best practices as broadly as possible. This applies to heritage value assessments, authenticity and integrity analyses, and many solutions employed in heritage management, such as risk assessments, monitoring, and cooperation with stakeholders. The World Heritage standard for such measures is implemented in the protection of other monuments and sites, since the specialists who deal with these issues are active in many countries, and transpose these solutions into national heritage protection systems. The UNESCO World Heritage movement has become an important factor in the development of world conservation theory and practice.

The UNESCO World Heritage List also has a major role to play in propagating the idea of heritage protection. The UNESCO list is an extremely widely recognized brand. Heritage and its protection is perceived as a source of pride, an important facet in identity, and a considerable economic contributor. Monuments and sites inscribed on the list are tourist destinations for millions. All this means that heritage protection is now a standard element in the executive strategies of both central governments and local authorities.

The successes and significance of the UNESCO World Heritage programme are such that the movement's future is of considerable significance. There is now a need for holistic reflection in order to recapitulate its achievements, assess its present state, and formulate prognoses and tasks for the future. Of no less importance is the issue of transposing these experiences into other areas of heritage protection.

Revisiting Europe's experiences to date and reflecting more broadly may be productive for the further development and improvement of the World Heritage system.

The International Cultural Centre, ICOMOS Poland and the City of Kraków hereby invite heritage professionals to submit their proposals for papers on the following themes:

❶ The achievements and experiences of the World Heritage Convention in Europe.

- What successes, experiences, and problems in respect of implementation of the World Heritage Convention have been seen in Europe?
- How have the World Heritage Convention and WH asset protection systems been incorporated into the legislative and heritage protection systems in the various countries of Europe?
- To what extent has inscription of European assets on the UNESCO list affected their protection, management, and use?
- What are the experiences of cooperation among the countries of Europe in respect of the implementation of the convention, including cooperation in preparation of serial nominations?
- How familiar, popular, and well-received is the concept of world heritage in Europe?

❷ Experiences and problems/challenges of European cities and villages inscribed on the World Heritage List.

- What have been the experiences arising from the inscription of European historic cities on the UNESCO list?
- What benefits and problems have arisen from the inscription of these historic cities on the UNESCO list?
- How are protection and management systems organized in the cities inscribed on the UNESCO list—examples of good practice?
- What effect have the requirements formulated in the World Heritage system had on the management of the cities on the UNESCO list?
- How has tourist traffic been stimulated/organized/restricted in the cities recognized as world heritage assets?

3 The WHL – trends and obstacles.

Changes in the implementation of the Convention.

- Do the inscriptions on the UNESCO list reflect and represent the heritage of Europe?
- What heritage groups, regions, and/or communities of Europe are not appropriately or sufficiently represented on the UNESCO list?
- Are there limits to the expansion of the UNESCO list from the European heritage perspective?
- Can or should Europe have a common development strategy (for future inscriptions) for the UNESCO list?
- To what extent and how should cooperation between European countries in respect of protection of UNESCO-list assets be organized— e.g. as regards transborder nominations or international serial nominations?

4 Potential for application of experience gleaned from the WHL system in national heritage protection systems.

- Has the 1972 UNESCO Convention affected monument protection systems in European countries, and if so, to what extent?
- To what extent are concepts such as *ouv*, authenticity, integrity, and buffer zones implemented and exploited in European heritage protection systems?
- To what extent are actions such as Management Plans, Heritage Impact Assessment, and monitoring implemented and exploited in European heritage protection systems?

5 Need for modifications to the WH system arising out of European experiences – what can Europe offer the WHL? How to enhance the 4+1 strategic objectives of the “Budapest Declaration”.

- In what direction could modification of the World Heritage system move based on European experiences?
- To what extent can the countries of Europe cooperate with/assist other regions in their implementation of the World Heritage Convention and protection of assets inscribed on the UNESCO list?
- What are the relations and potential areas of cooperation between the UNESCO list and the European Heritage Label initiative?
- What are the prospects and proposals in terms of use of international serial nominations to achieve Fuller representative of European heritage on the UNESCO list?

⑥ Cooperation with the Visegrad Group as an example of regional concern for WHL sites.

- What effect has the UNESCO list had on regional cooperation in Europe, e.g. in the Visegrad Group countries?
- How has the creation of the UNESCO list influenced the heritage protection and management systems in the countries of the Visegrad Group?
- What projects promoting the UNESCO list in the Visegrad Group countries could offer inspiration for action within the wider community of European states?
- Regional and world heritage using the example of Visegrad Group countries.

Proposals for 20-minute presentations should include a brief biographical note with your title and institutional affiliation and a maximum 150-word abstract in English. They should be submitted by e-mail to unesco50@mck.krakow.pl by February 18, 2022.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent by March 31, 2022.

Due to the unpredictable character of COVID-19 pandemic the conference will be organised either in traditional form in the seat of the ICC in Kraków or in a hybrid way using on-line technologies.

The conference will be held in English and followed by a peer-reviewed publication. All articles up to 4000–6000 words long, following the assigned style guide and submitted by the deadline (to be announced), will be considered for publication.

There is no conference fee. Transport and accommodation costs are covered by conference participants themselves (if the conference is held at the ICC in Krakow).

➔ <https://mck.krakow.pl/conferences/50-years-unesco-whc>