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28 December 2003

To: To Focal Points for Periodic Reporting, Permanent Delegations and National Commissions of European States Parties to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention

Madam/Sir,

Subject: Periodic Reporting on the application of the World Heritage Convention and on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties in Europe

I am honoured to give you updated information on the Periodic Reporting exercise for Europe, which is, as you are aware, based on Article 29 of the 1972 *Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage*. The World Heritage Committee, at its twenty-second session in December 1998, decided to invite States Parties to the World Heritage Convention to submit the Periodic Reports every six years in accordance with the Format for Periodic Reports as adopted by this session.

Focal Points

Following my Circular Letter of 27 November 2002, most of the governmental authorities have appointed a focal point for cultural properties as national coordinator for the exercise in the State Party and, when considered necessary, a national focal point for natural heritage. Due to the large number of States Parties participating in the process, and the obligation of the State Party to submit one report, the appointment of a focal point will facilitate the work of the World Heritage Centre in its communications with the State Party. The focal point will be responsible for the submission of the final report.

When a focal point has not been officially appointed, the World Heritage Centre will consider the Permanent Delegation of the State Party to UNESCO, as the official representative for Periodic Reporting. I therefore strongly recommend to those States Parties that did not appoint a focal point to do this as soon as possible. This is of particular importance for the electronic completion of the Questionnaires (see below).

Format and Explanatory notes

The World Heritage Committee adopted a Format that divides the Periodic Reporting Exercise into two Sections. Section I concerns the application of the World Heritage Convention in the State Party, and Section II the state of conservation of World Heritage properties located on the territory of the State Party. The Explanatory Notes are designed to provide guidance to those preparing Periodic Reports. They relate to the headings of the Format under which information is sought.

The Periodic Reporting Questionnaire

To facilitate the preparation of the report, a Questionnaire has been developed in cooperation with the Rapporteur of the Working Group for Periodic Reporting and the Advisory Bodies¹, which the States Parties are strongly encouraged to use. It closely follows the subjects referred to in the Explanatory Notes, but in contrast to the latter splits the subjects up into short questions to be answered in a few sentences or paragraphs. The Questionnaire will facilitate the comparative analysis and the preparation of the regional synthesis report as well as the sub-regional reports, which the World Heritage Centre has to submit to the World Heritage Committee. A Word version of the Questionnaire, in English and French, which also includes the Format and the Explanatory Notes, can be downloaded from our web page.

The Electronic Tool

In order to improve the comparative analysis of data to be received from 48 States Parties and about 300 World Heritage sites, and to better collect the information of this exercise (also for future Periodic Reports), the World Heritage Centre has developed an electronic version of the Questionnaire which is to be filled in directly at the Centre's web page, at <http://whc1.unesco.org/periodicreporting/>. All focal points will receive by e-mail a password to access the electronic tool. If you haven't done so yet, please submit your e-mail address to c.delsol@unesco.org. In order to simplify reporting of similar Section I type data by States Parties to the Council of Europe, the Centre envisages providing the Council of Europe, through its HEREIN tool, with digital access to Section I responses, pending the State Party's authorization to release this data.

¹ The World Heritage Centre is in particular grateful to Ms Antonia Carr Locke (United Kingdom) for the preparation of the first drafts of the Questionnaire, which are based on Questionnaires from other regions.

Submission of the reports and deadlines

The Periodic Report has to be submitted in English or French to the World Heritage Centre. States Parties are strongly recommended to fill in the electronic online version of the Questionnaire, which can also be printed, signed and submitted to the World Heritage Centre in paper form. The completion of the online tool will facilitate the comparative analysis of data and the preparation of the regional and sub-regional reports.

If the online version is not used, the State Party might fill in the Word version of the Questionnaire (which can be downloaded from our web pages), print it, sign it and submit it to the Centre both in paper as in electronic form (by e-mail). If none of these options is used, the State Party might draft the report according to the Format, sign it and submit it to the Centre. However, this option will make the efficient collection and analysis of data in the long term enormously difficult.

Section I should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre before December 2004, preferably already in July 2004; The Centre will submit the report for Section I to the World Heritage Committee in June/July 2005. All the 50 States Parties participating in this Periodic Reporting exercise have to fill in Section I of the Report.

Section II should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre before December 2005, preferably already in July 2005. The Centre will submit the report for Section II to the World Heritage Committee in June/July 2006.

North America

As decided by the World Heritage Committee, the North American Region will submit both Section I and Section II in 2004 for review by the Committee in 2005.

Section I

All States Parties have to fill in Section I of the Periodic Report. It refers to the legislative and administrative provisions which the State Party has adopted and other actions which it has taken for the application of the 1972 *Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage*. There is only one Section I report, which includes both natural and cultural heritage. The Format asks for the identification of cultural and natural heritage properties (inventories, tentative lists and nominations) and questions related to the protection, conservation and presentation of both cultural and natural heritage. It might be difficult from the national point of view to integrate both under each of the questions of the Format. However, one of the intentions of the Report is to evaluate the level of coordination between cultural and natural policies. It is expected that the designated focal point for Periodic Reporting will be filling in Section I in coordination with all relevant authorities, and that both focal points for cultural and natural heritage bring together their drafts under the same headings of the final and single Section I report. The same should apply when the completion of Section I is done by different territorial entities, as there is only one report per State Party to the Convention.

Section II

Only States Parties with World Heritage properties inscribed up to (and including) 1998 have to fill in Section II of the report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties in the State Party. To facilitate the completion of Section II, the World Heritage Centre has provided CD-Roms with the original nomination files to the focal points of each of the States Parties.

The Questionnaire and the electronic tool for Section II will be available early 2004. Section II should be completed by the site manager or the person most directly involved with the property, in coordination with the focal point. It is therefore strongly recommended to contact the site managers and inform them about the exercise. A number of national and sub-regional meetings has already taken place (see below). If needed, translation of the Format and the Questionnaire into other languages could be useful. However, the language of submission of the report can only be French or English, as official working languages

Regional and Sub-Regional Reports

When the World Heritage Centre receives the Periodic Reports, it will prepare a regional report to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee. Due to the amount of countries and sites in the Europe region, we intend to divide this regional report into sub-regions. The World Heritage Centre benefits from the assistance of the Nordic World Heritage Foundation for the preparation of a sub-regional report for the Nordic and Baltic States, and the assistance of the Russian World Heritage Committee for the preparation of a sub-regional report for the Russian Federation and the European CIS States Parties. Sub-regional meetings are also taking place to inform focal points of the different regions in Europe about the Periodic Reporting exercise.

Information meetings

In 2003, the following national and sub-regional meetings on Periodic Reporting took place: First joint meeting of World Heritage site managers of the United States and Canada for the Periodic Reporting Exercise (January 2003), UK Periodic Reporting Meeting, London, UK (April 2003), First Joint European and World Heritage network meeting, Nicosia, Cyprus (May 2003), Periodic Reporting Information meeting in UNESCO Headquarters (July 2003, during the World Heritage Committee session), Periodic Reporting meeting for site managers from German speaking countries (Austria, Germany, Switzerland), Brühl, Germany (July 2003), Periodic Reporting meeting for natural heritage site managers from Russia, Vilm, Germany (August 2003), Periodic Reporting meeting for the Baltic Region and Nordic countries, Riga, Latvia (September 2003), Periodic Reporting meeting for cultural heritage for Russia and Eastern European CIS countries, Moscow, Russia (September 2003).

The following meetings are scheduled for 2004:

21-23 January	North American Periodic Reporting Meeting, Quebec, Canada
3-7 March	South Eastern Europe Periodic Reporting Meeting, Trieste, Italy
11 March	Europe Periodic Reporting information meeting at UNESCO Headquarters (after the Information Meeting of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention)
21 to 25 April	Central-Eastern European Periodic Reporting Meeting, Hungary
29 April – 2 May	Follow-up meeting Russia and CIS countries, Moscow, Russia
June/July 2004	Information meeting during the 28 th session of the World Heritage Committee (Suzhou, China)

Additional information on these meetings can be found on our web pages². Furthermore, we would appreciate receiving information from the States Parties on any national meetings foreseen.

Working Group

The participants of the information meeting in Nicosia (Cyprus, May 2003) decided to set up an open Working Group to exchange ideas during the Periodic Reporting exercise. Mr Tamas Fejerdy, Chair of the Hungarian World Heritage Committee was designated Chair of this Working Group (omvh21fejerdy@mail.datanet.hu). Mr Christopher Young, from English Heritage, was appointed Rapporteur (chris.young@english-heritage.uk). The World Heritage Centre, as Secretariat, would facilitate the work of the Working Group. The Advisory Bodies ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM are also part of the Working Group. As in 2003, the Working Group will meet during information sessions. In order to make the Working Group more operational, e-mail exchange with the Chair, the Rapporteur, the Secretariat, the Advisory Bodies and focal points is strongly encouraged. The Centre will update the information on the Working Group on its web pages, where also the e-mail addresses of the focal points are to be found.

New web page

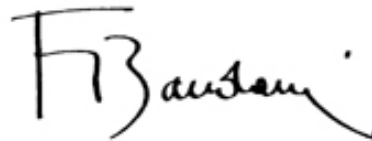
All the information given above, as well as this Circular Letter, will be provided on the web pages of the World Heritage Centre (<http://whc.unesco.org/PeriodicReporting/Europe>). This web page is currently being

² <http://whc.unesco.org/PeriodicReporting/Europe>

updated and includes the electronic tool for Periodic Reporting. This tool can only be accessed with a password which will be provided to the focal points. The Word version of the Questionnaire will also be available.

I thank you in advance for your kind co-operation in supporting the World Heritage Centre in the preparation of the European and North American Regional Synthesis Report on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties. This should be completed and submitted to the World Heritage Committee according to the timetable. The timely submission of your national reports will enable the World Heritage Committee to carry out a thorough review that will also benefit other regions of the world.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Bandarin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Francesco Bandarin
Director
UNESCO World Heritage Centre

cc: ICOMOS, ICCROM, IUCN
UNESCO Field Offices in Moscow and Venice
Nordic World Heritage Foundation
Permanent Delegation of the USA; US National Parks Service
Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO; National Commission of Canada
for UNESCO
Chair of the Working Group on Periodic Reporting
Rapporteur of the Working Group on Periodic Reporting