

**Report of the meeting of National Focal Points of Mediterranean  
European countries on the preparation of the Second Cycle of the  
Periodic Reporting exercise**



Valletta, Malta

21-24 September 2011

### General observations

General feedback during the discussions showed that this meeting was an important event during which National Focal Points were reminded of the overall framework, purpose and time-frames of Periodic Reporting. The meeting focused on the three pillars of Periodic Reporting, i.e. the Retrospective Inventory, retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value and the Periodic Reporting Questionnaires. The main conclusion of the meeting was that, although the documents and reports that need to be prepared may seem as additional tasks, they are, in reality, useful tools that allow managing our sites better. All in all, the meeting provided a forum for fruitful discussion and sharing of experiences among focal points and representatives from the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies. The main conclusions and points raised during the meeting are highlighted below.

### Clarification and minor modification of boundaries and establishment of buffer zones

Participants were presented with the process of clarification and minor modification of boundaries. The main problems that are normally encountered within the documentation submitted were highlighted, together with clear guidelines on the correct formats and information required. The process of boundary clarifications is only necessary for properties inscribed between 1978 and 1998 and is therefore a retrospective exercise. Minor boundary modifications on the other hand can be proposed for all properties. Modifications to site boundaries must be reviewed by the Advisory Bodies and approved by the World Heritage Committee.

### Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV)

The main focus of the meeting was the preparation of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value. Several presentations were given by representatives from the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN on the format, process and sources for Statements of Outstanding Universal Value as well as on the specific sections of the document and what they should consist of. Specific training on how to draft valid retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value was conducted via several facilitated workshops, with participants discussing and preparing the retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for the following World Heritage properties:

- City of Valletta,
- Ibiza, Biodiversity and Culture and
- Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in that City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura.

Participants of each group then shared their results and difficulties encountered, allowing for discussions among all participants on how to best tackle particular issues.

Important points that emerged from the presentations and discussions were:

- Statements of Outstanding Universal Value are retrospective, and therefore should reflect what the World Heritage Committee accepted as a justification of Outstanding Universal Value at the time of inscription.
- Serial properties should have a single Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.
- The main sources of information for preparing retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value should be the Committee Decision, the Advisory Bodies' evaluation and the nomination file.
- The *brief synthesis* should be a brief description of the property, its values and attributes at the time of inscription.
- For the *justification of criteria*, the appropriate version of criteria must be used. Where the Committee has agreed on the justification for the accepted criteria, the wording that was adopted at the time must be respected.
- For many properties, information on *authenticity and integrity* at the time of inscription is not available. In these cases, the status as of today should be recorded. Vulnerabilities must be mentioned, as this provides a reference point for management and conservation frameworks.
- When considering new projects in retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value, one has to keep in mind whether the key attributes are affected by this development.
- The *protection and management* section should reflect the current situation, highlighting the most important commitments that the state party is making for the long-term protection and management of the property, while also indicating long-term challenges and expectations.
- In the case of serial properties, this section should ensure co-ordinated management of the separate components of the property.
- In the case of natural sites, protection should be ensured for an area which reflects the spatial requirements of species, habitats, etc.
- This section of the Outstanding Universal Value should be the starting point of the Management Plan, outlining the overall vision for the property in question.
- Statements of Outstanding Universal Value should be drafted at the local level. However, they should be checked and sent by National authorities.

#### Implementation of the Second Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise

Participants were reminded of the overall framework of Periodic Reporting, its aims and objectives, and lessons learnt and changes made from the first cycle. For the second cycle, the PR questionnaire will be a partly pre-filled online facility, in order to simplify the process both for State Parties and the World Heritage Centre. The Questionnaire should be filled by both Site Managers and Focal Points, although Focal Points are responsible for checking and verifying the data and submitting the

Questionnaires to the World Heritage Centre. The Questionnaire is currently available online in word format, and States Parties are advised to collect the information that will be needed to fill in the Questionnaires well before the established deadlines. Participants were also given an overview of the new format of the Questionnaire, highlighting technical information relating to the format itself and with examples of the different types of questions that will have to be filled in and what is required in each case.

Important points that emerged from the ensuing discussion were:

- the importance of identifying contact persons immediately for transnational and transboundary sites
- formal submission of the questionnaire is via the online form
- Focal Points raised concern on questionnaires for serial sites, stating that information might be lost. World Heritage Centre representatives advised Focal Points to use the comments sections to explain and expand on such instances.
- It was emphasized that for the exercise to be useful, questionnaires must be filled honestly. States Parties were also encouraged to invest the required resources for the task.

Finally, participants were reminded of important deadlines relating to the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting, which are:

1 December 2011: retrospective inventory

1 February 2012: submission of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value

31 July 2013: submission of Questionnaires (Group A)

31 July 2014: submission of questionnaires (Group B)

February 2015: compilation of regional report

June-July 2015: examination by World Heritage Committee

#### State of Conservation and reactive monitoring

Participants were also reminded of process of Reactive Monitoring Mechanisms and State of Conservation reports, and related sections in the *Operational Guidelines*. The following points were made during the discussion that followed:

- It is the State Party's responsibility to inform the Committee on major restoration and/or construction projects that may affect a property's Outstanding Universal Value, prior to any irreversible decision.
- It was pointed out that guidelines are available online. Guidelines on Heritage Impact Assessments are also in some cases translated into national languages in consultation with national ICOMOS (see [http://www.international.icomos.org/world\\_heritage/WH\\_Committee\\_34th\\_session\\_Brasilia/ICOMOS\\_Heritage\\_Impact\\_Assessment\\_2010.pdf](http://www.international.icomos.org/world_heritage/WH_Committee_34th_session_Brasilia/ICOMOS_Heritage_Impact_Assessment_2010.pdf)).

- Some Focal Points suggested that the use of forms for feedback and requests from the public could facilitate work for both the World Heritage Centre and Focal Points themselves. It was agreed that although this is a possible option, the general public cannot be forced to use only one type of feedback system.
- It is important that States Parties follow up requests for feedback on a local and national level. This will eventually reduce the number of complaints from the general public. Awareness campaigns and communication on a local level with regards to World Heritage may also help in this regard.

#### Other

Site visits were organized in Valletta and to Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Temples. Both visits were an opportunity for further discussion and sharing of experiences on actual management challenges and approaches at site level.