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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION**

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-fifth session

**Helsinki, Finland
11-16 December 2001**

Information document : Report of the States Parties Meeting towards a joint nomination of areas of the Alpine Arc for the World Heritage List (Turin, Italy 5-8 July 2001)

The Committee may wish to take note of the synthesis report of the States Parties Meeting towards a joint nomination of areas of the Alpine Arc for the World Heritage List (Turin, Italy 5-8 July 2001) and the conclusions and recommendations contained in the document. The recommendations are addressed to the Committee, the States Parties in the region and to the advisory bodies to the Convention.

Furthermore, the Committee may wish to note that the States Parties agreed to organize a follow-up consultation meeting on 29 October 2001 in UNESCO Headquarters (Paris, France) to continue the collaborative effort towards a joint nomination of areas of the Alpine Arc.

The “States Parties meeting towards a joint nomination of areas of the Alpine Arc for the World Heritage List” was held at the Museo Nazionale della Montagna (Turin, Italy, 5 - 8 July 2001) was attended by 35 participants from 5 States Parties of the Alpine Arc. The List of participants and the agenda of the meeting is included in Annex I and II of this report.

Mr. Aldo Audisio, Director of the Museum, opened the meeting and warmly welcomed the participants at the Museo Nazionale della Montagna.

Mr. Marco Cicchelli, Representative of the Region of Piedmont, highlighted the role of Turin as the “capital of the Alps” and as a candidate for the 2006 Olympic Games. He stated that the importance of the meeting lies in the collective protection of the fragile heritage of the Alpine chain and to proceed with a common approach towards joint nominations.

Mr. Giampiero Leo, assessor of the Regional Government, wished the participants a successful meeting to advance with the protection of the Alpine Arc.

Mr. Gabriele Sardo, Ambassador of Italy to UNESCO, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Italian Government and emphasised that it is the first time that the States Parties concerned work together for the common goal of World Heritage in the Alpine Arc and to define shared criteria towards nominations.

Mr. Francesco Bandarin, Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, thanked the Italian Government for the kind invitation and all representatives for their support for this meeting. He highlighted the importance the World Heritage Centre attached to this exercise which could be a model for other regions in particular with regard to a collaborative process and the protection of international and transfrontier sites. He also informed the meeting of the UN year on Mountains 2002 and the 30th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in 2002.

Mr. Francesco Francioni, President of the meeting, thanked the organizer for their support in this unique exercise and underlined the values of the Alpine region as a place of encounter between complex living cultures and a vast natural system resulting in unique natural, cultural as well as intangible heritage. The Alps were already mentioned by Herodot. He expressed his hopes that achieve good results. He also mentioned the prerequisite of national inventories under the 1972 Convention, the 1991 Alpine Convention and the 2000 European Landscape Convention. He invited all representatives of States Parties to present their views.

The representative of Austria, *Mr. Horcicka*, welcomed the meeting as step towards the co-operation among the States Parties and to redress the imbalance between natural and cultural heritage in the European Region. He explained that his delegation consisted of a number of representatives of the different regions, who intend to prepared nominations for the World Heritage List.

The representative of France, *Mr. Decoud*, expressed the support of the French Government for a joint proposal both for natural and cultural landscape values. He stated the need for defining criteria and themes to proceed. As the inscription of sites is a long time consuming process, time needs to be given to the States Parties for a consistent approach and a co-ordinated effort to achieve the overall recognition of the heritage of the Alps.

The representative of Germany, *Mr. Plachter*, welcomed the initiative and informed the participants that only a small part of the Alps is located on German territory. The federal structure of Germany makes even the preparation of the tentative list a lengthy exercise. The Alps is one of the oldest cultural landscapes in Europe and that the Convention could play a major role to enhance the recognition of the diverse cultural, ecosystem and landscape values. He highlighted the results of the Hallstatt expert meeting and the Natura 2000 programme which provided data for evaluation.

The representatives of Italy, *Ms Gasparrini*, informed the participants that Italy has the presidency of the Alpine Convention in 2001/2002 and that priorities are set towards common goals and objectives to protect the fragile environment and work towards sustainable development for the whole region. *Mr. Malara* underlined the ideas of the Hallstatt meeting to work towards a joint nomination. Concerning the themes, they could reach from the scientific and ecological aspects, to cultural traditions, transhumance and mountain architecture as well as the intangible heritage. Most important would be a set of priorities concerning cross-border collaboration and management. *Ms. Patricia Rossi*, representing the Parce Alpi-Maritimi, informed the participants of collaboration already taking place in the Western Alps, including a meeting with the French national parks of La Vanoise, Ecrins and Mercantour, which reviewed the possibility for transboundary nomination dossiers.

The representative of Switzerland, *Mr. Ruoss*, explained major problems of the Alps, such as the traffic situation. He stated that the alpine research has much advanced in the collaboration of the Alpine Convention and in the network of protected areas. He said that the Swiss nomination of the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn was a step towards the recognition of the unique values of Alpine heritage.

Following the statements from the representatives of the States Parties present, the Chairperson invited for a broader debate to achieve specific recommendations, which could cover the intentions towards joint nominations and general principles, working methods, criteria and categories as well as the legal background. The participants, after a substantive debate agreed on the text of the recommendations of the meeting as presented below.

The representative of Italy, *Ambassador Sardo*, proposed that a meeting of the technical group be held prior to the General Assembly of States Parties to prepare a framework document by the States Parties concerned and to achieve the practical goals for the World Heritage Committee meeting in Helsinki.

The Representative of Austria, *Mr. Horcicka*, on behalf of the other participants, thanked the Italian Government for hosting the meeting and for the wonderful hospitality. He thanked the Chairperson for his kindness and his ways to find consensus in this unique exercise and the World Heritage Centre for the excellent work.

In closing the session, the Chairperson thanked all participants for their contributions and said that it was a very enjoyable experience, not only to work with many colleagues and friends, but also to enhance the efforts to promote new ways in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Recommendations of the States Parties Meeting towards a joint nomination of areas of the Alpine Arc for the World Heritage List (Turin, Italy 5-8 July 2001)

Preamble

The representatives of all States Parties from the Alpine Region participating in the meeting (see list of participants Annex I) wished to achieve an international recognition of the universal value of the richness and diversity of the Alpine Arc. The representatives note that this is an area of considerable importance for humanity as a whole, both in terms of natural and cultural values as well as for the specific interactions between people and their mountain environment.

The participants agreed to the principle of international co-operation as defined by the World Heritage Convention to protect the outstanding universal value of the Alpine Arc. To this end, the participants agreed that a consultative process be maintained among all State Parties concerned and that every initiative that a State Party undertakes with regard to possible nominations takes into consideration potential transborder implications and the possible interests involved for other States Parties.

The representatives of the States Parties recommend:

1. For working purposes the Alpine Arc is defined as the area covered by the Alpine Convention.
2. The participants refer to the discussions concerning nominations from the Alpine Arc during the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee and the twenty-third session of its Bureau (1999). They note the results of the international expert meeting held in Hallstatt, Austria, (June 2000), which was supported by the World Heritage Committee and which provided case studies for the consideration of States Parties and general recommendations towards nominations from the Alps. The participants referred to these results as a basis for defining criteria towards joint World Heritage nominations from the Alps.
3. The participants highlighted the unique character of the task of preparing joint nominations from the large area of the Alpine region and the need to identify specific areas from the whole Alpine region based on clearly defined criteria.
4. Concerning these **criteria**, the participants noted specific features of the Alps:

The natural values of the Alps are unique: it is a veritable open-air geological museum, a relict territory of more than a thousand receding glaciers, a mosaic of very diverse natural landscapes of great beauty with exceptional biological diversity.

specific natural values:

- significant natural environments: persistence of ecological dominance of natural features and processes, level of endemism, globally threatened species and “alpine” species
- characteristic ecosystems from summits to valleys and lowlands
- outstanding geological, paleontological and geomorphological sites

The cultural values lie in the very close interaction between people and their environment: this area is shaped by seven millennia of unique agricultural, forestry and pastoral practices and thus constitutes a pattern of unique cultural landscapes on a world scale.

specific cultural values:

- symbolic and associative sites of the Alps (history of Alpinism, famous peaks etc.)
- specific features which reflect the exchange between cultures such as passes, pathways, routes, fortifications and itineraries (salt route)
- related intangible heritage of the Alps (diversity of languages, surviving cultures)
- adaptation of high mountains cultures to the environment which results in specific cultural (in particular rural) landscapes and traditions (transhumance, pastures etc.)
- example of mountain architectural features and complexes (e.g. mountain villages)

5. The participants underline the need to progressively identify areas of natural, cultural and mixed character in a gradual manner, taking into account the stage of development in each country (tentative lists, preparation of nominations). The participants therefore agree to a phased nomination process. The participants also noted paragraph 19 of the Operational Guidelines “States Parties may propose in a single nomination a series of cultural or natural properties in different geographical locations, provided that they are related because they belong to: (i) the same historico-cultural group or (ii) the same type of property which is characteristic of the geographical zone, (iii) the same geomorphological formation, the same biogeographic province, or the same ecosystem type and provided that it is the series as such, and not its components taken individually, which is of outstanding universal value.”

6. The participants agreed to the general objective to establish a balanced and representative network of sites from the Alpine Arc.

7. The participants noted that the International Scientific Committee for Alpine Research (SCAR), a body connected to the Alpine Convention representing the Academies of Sciences of the respective contracting Parties, will organize the Forum Alpinum in Austria from 23 to 27 September 2002. The participants encouraged experts to participate in this event to enhance international collaboration in this field. The French Delegation informed participants that the “Réseau alpin des espaces protégées” (Gap, France) is at the disposal of all States Parties for assistance needed in the field of protected areas identification and management. The participants welcomed the idea that other organizations committed to Alpine activities be invited to lend their contribution and support, among others, the Club Arc Alpin.

8. The participants also underlined the protective provisions and the potentiality for collaborative action of other legal instruments, such as the Alpine Convention, in particular with reference to Article 12 of the Landscape Protocol, whose implementation can foster the goal of transboundary protection, the Bern Convention, and the European Landscape Convention.

9. The participants note that the UN year on Mountains in 2002 may provide an opportunity to enhance awareness building among local communities and decision makers about the diverse heritage of the Alpine Arc.

10. States Parties should define a set of shared criteria for transfrontier and serial, including clustered, sites. The latter should be selected upon categories such as mentioned in paragraph 4 above. Within each category, homogenous sites of the best values should be identified. Consideration should be given to joint nominations and procedures. Other types of sites should be dealt with on a national basis, as had been the case so far.

11. The participants note the new procedures proposed by the World Heritage Committee for selecting and reducing the number of World Heritage nominations to be processed in the future. The proposal for a joint nomination of the Alpine Arc by the States Parties concerned, is fully in line with the Committee's reform process to ensure a balanced and representative World Heritage List.

12. The participants agree to create a technical contact group composed of Governmental experts, with the assistance of the Advisory Bodies and members of the World Heritage Centre, which may call on other consultative expert groups, in order to pursue the goal of preparing a framework document to be submitted after appropriate consultation at the institutional level at a future meeting of the World Heritage Committee.

13. The participants agreed that the above recommendations be transmitted to the twenty-fifth session of the World Heritage Committee (Helsinki, Finland 11 – 16 December 2001) for endorsement of the general principles.

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ANNEX I

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PROGRAMME

Thursday, July 5th	
14.30	<i>Welcome addresses and opening of the meeting</i>
15.00 – 18.00	First working session Chair: <i>Prof. F. Francioni</i> Presentation of the Italian proposal concerning the criteria to identify areas for the nomination (<i>Arch. P. B. Malara</i>) Comments of the delegations
20.30	Dinner offered by Regione Piemonte and by Museo Nazionale della Montagna Ristorante “Vintage”, Piazza Solferino 16 H, Torino
Friday, July 6th	
09.30 – 12.30	Second working session Chair: <i>Prof. F. Francioni</i> Contributions of the delegations Debate
13.00	Lunch at the Museum restaurant
14.00 – 23.00	Excursion to Sampeyre Pass, Elva e Saluzzo Dinner offered by Provincia di Cuneo and by Comune di Saluzzo Ristorante “Ostu dij Baloss”, via Gualtieri 38, Saluzzo (CN)
Saturday, July 7th	
09.30 – 12.00	Third working session Chair: <i>Prof. F. Francioni</i> Presentation concerning some possible application of criteria to Italian areas (<i>Prof. A. Biancotti</i>) Debate
12.00	Presentation of the reorganization project of Museo Nazionale della Montagna e Vedetta Alpina (press conference)
13.00	Colazione nel ristorante del Museo
14.30 – 18.00	Quarta sessione di lavoro Presiede: <i>Prof. F. Francioni</i> Presentation, discussion and approval of the final document
20.30	Dinner offered by Città di Torino Ristorante “La Smarrita”, via C. Battisti, 17, Torino
Sunday, July 8th	
08.30	Departure to Exilles Fort
10.00 – 12.00	Visit of the Fort
13.30	Return to Torino