

## WORLD HERITAGE LIST

### Hallstatt-Dachstein (Austria)

No 806

#### Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	Hallstatt-Dachstein Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape
<i>Location</i>	Provinces of Upper Austria (nominated property and buffer zone) and Styria and Salzburg (buffer zone)
<i>State Party</i>	Republic of Austria
<i>Date</i>	16 July 1996

#### Justification by State Party

The Hallstatt-Dachstein cultural landscape is part of the Salzkammergut, and thus of the Eastern Alps. Owing to its varied mountain ranges, numerous lakes, beautiful features, and art-historic treasures, as well as the economic features in both the past and the present, it forms a generic cultural geographical unit.

The Dachstein is characterized by its *massif* form, the extensive and highly karstic plateau, high, often sheer, precipices, and the exceptionally wide glaciation. The landscape is traversed by the U-shaped valley of the Traun river and the fjordlike Hallstättersee, with the market town of Hallstatt wedged between the mountain and the south-western shore of the lake. Favoured by its location, the core of the town is a unique example of the Gothic miners' settlement with its basic structures still discernible and Late Baroque additions made after the great fire of 1750. Owing to its high density of historic monuments, Hallstatt is an urban monument of the highest order. The magnificent scenery has allowed little space for the architectural evolution of human settlement. The attempt to make the optimum use of the space available can clearly be seen within the basically Gothic core of the settlement and its Baroque additions, whose prominent silhouette and almost complete original ensemble have been preserved to the present day. The recognition that this was a unique landscape in its traditional context led to any interventions, such as the construction of a

road along the lake-shore, being rejected from early in the 1960s and appropriate alternatives being encouraged in order to preserve the historic material.

The cultural landscape of the Hallstatt-Dachstein region boasts a continuing organic evolution covering 2500 years. From the very beginning its history has been linked primarily with the economic history of salt extraction. Salt mining has always determined every aspect of life, as well as the architectural and artistic material evidence. Salt production on a major scale can be traced in Hallstatt back to the Middle Bronze Age in the mid 2nd millennium BC.

The rich and variegated flora and fauna of the Hallstatt-Dachstein region draws its support from a changing mountain landscape that reaches up to the snow-belt, thus providing many ecological niches, both large and small. It is remarkable for a mountain region to have so many rare and endangered plant species that are on the Red Lists. The fact that many stretches of woodland in inaccessible locations are almost untouched by humans is worthy of special mention. Owing to the low level of development and the enclosed character of the region, these conservation areas are also of major importance for those species that are very sensitive to human interference.

The significance of the glaciated Dachstein mountain, nearly 3000m high, lies in the great density of caves and the three important sites designed to explain the origin and formation of caves to the general public, each representing a different speleological type.

Hallstatt is, however, of universal significance not only because of its natural beauty, but also for its archaeological heritage, starting with the prehistoric Iron Age culture which shaped central Europe three thousand years ago. Two sites in particular have produced major finds: the cemetery that gave the Hallstatt Culture its name and the salt mine. Both are situated in the Salzberg valley, high above the present-day town of Hallstatt. They are linked by the fact that salt-mining provided the economic basis for the affluence and the high quality of the objects found in the graves, more than a thousand of which have been excavated so far. At no other time in human cultural development did metals exert so much influence in terms of manufacturing skills, craftsmanship, and artistic design. Among the spectacular finds are magnificent jewellery, richly decorated weapons, and fine bronze and ceramic vessels. Ivory, amber, and glass testify to extensive trade relations.

An essential factor in the abiding historical value of the region is its pictorial qualities, which combine natural and architectural form. Their discovery and artistic development were the pioneering work of important painters and writers of the Biedermeier era and early Realism in Austria. Adalbert Stifter, who pioneered official monument preservation in Austria, set his internationally famous novel *Nachtsommer* (*Indian Summer*), in which the main character develops visionary ideas on the future of monument preservation, in the Hallstatt-Dachstein literary landscape.

In addition to the varied scenery and the bioclimatic conditions, the by-products of salt-mining have resulted in the evolution of an internationally renowned spa tourism. With the development of the transport network in the 19th century the Salzkammergut began to enjoy a flourishing *villégiature* culture in and around Hallstatt, and since the mid 20th century it has been one of the best known tourist regions in Europe.

The cultural landscape of the Hallstatt-Dachstein-Salzkammergut region is unique evidence of an epoch of human history. It also reflects the inseparable unity of nature and culture in both its landscape and its historic monuments and sites.

[Note The State Party does not make any proposals in the nomination dossier concerning the criteria under which it considers the property should be inscribed on the World Heritage List.]

### Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut constitutes both a *group of buildings* and a *site*. It is submitted as a *cultural landscape*, as defined in the *Operational Guidelines* (1997), paragraphs 35-41.

### History and Description

#### History

Recent research deep within the Salzberg has demonstrated that systematic salt production was being carried out in the region as early as the Middle Bronze Age (later 2nd millennium BC). Natural brine was captured in deep basins and evaporated in special ceramic vessels. Of great interest in itself in the history of salt extraction, this development is of considerable significance in illuminating the origins of the Iron Age Hallstatt Culture and in emphasizing the importance of the area as a "scientific reservoir" for further research and increased understanding.

Underground mining for salt began at the end of the Late Bronze Age, using a shaft technique adopted from copper mining. This production was halted for a relatively short time, possibly because political events caused an interruption in trade. It resumed in the 8th century BC, this time using a system of drift mining with horizontal galleries. Evidence of both techniques has been found in the Salzbergtal.

The prehistoric cemetery associated with these industrial operations, discovered in the 1840s, is the type-site for the first phase of the Early Iron Age in Europe, known to archaeologists as the Hallstatt Culture. It was in use in two periods: the 8th and 7th centuries BC and again in the 6th century BC. The rich grave goods, both local products and imported luxury materials, testify to a stratified and highly organized society, trading widely into central Europe, the Baltic, and the Adriatic.

Salt extraction continued in the region well into the Roman period, and a Roman industrial settlement has been identified in the Echterntal. Thereafter there is no evidence of the salt being exploited until the early 14th century. However, the name of the medieval town, derived from the West German *hal* (salt) and the Old High German *stat* (settlement), first recorded in a deed of 1305, testifies to its primary function. Title to the salt mines passed from the Trauenkirchen monastery to the Austrian Crown, and the town received the right to hold markets. A unique status was accorded to certain citizens of Hallstatt, known as *Salzfertiger*, who were responsible for drying, packing, and selling cart-loads of salt, which were assigned to them. Their high status is demonstrated by the quality and special nature of their houses, the *Salzfertigerhäuser*, to be found in Hallstatt and Bad Ischl.

Salt production required large quantities of timber, for shoring the mines and fuel for evaporation, and so forestry operations were also regulated by the Crown officials. Until the early 16th century salt-mining licences were generally leased to independent burghers, but these were systematically eliminated and in 1524 mining and forestry operations came under direct Crown management. This resulted in the construction of a number of important engineering features, such as the wooden brine pipeline begun in 1595.

During the Reformation, Protestantism acquired many adherents among the miners and foresters of the Hallstatt region, but they were not permitted to exercise their faith publicly until the Edict of Toleration of 1781.

A disastrous fire in 1750 destroyed most of the medieval core of Hallstatt. This was followed by massive rebuilding in Late Baroque style, which distinguished the town centre up to the present day. There was a boom in salt production at the beginning of the 19th century, to finance the war against France, but the return of peace saw an abrupt slump. Despite technical innovations, such as the introduction of electric power and the construction of a rail link, which permitted the import of coal (1877), the salters finally closed down in 1965. Salt production, however, remains as high as ever, though the brine is now piped down the valley to a modern treatment plant at Ebersee; only some sixty men are now employed in a very efficient mining operation which has become highly mechanized and computerized. Some parts of the mine are now accessible to visitors, including areas made safe for displays arising from the continuing programme of archaeological investigation.

However, the decline of this industrial base coincided with the rise of a new factor, the recognition of the aesthetic, cultural, and natural qualities of the region by writers such as Adalbert Stifter, novelist and first *Conservator* for Upper Austria, and the dramatic poet Franz Grillparzer, and most of the leading painters of the Biedermeier school. The first hotel to serve the growing number of tourists was built in 1855, followed by the first public brine baths in the 1860s.

Since that time the region has steadily increased its popularity as a major tourist resort.

#### *Description*

The town of Hallstatt grew up along the narrow strip between the steep mountainside of the Salzberg and the lake, and on the Mühlbach, an artificial promontory out into the lake resulting from the dumping of mining debris over the centuries. Here in the inner market town the houses, largely Late Gothic, are ranged round a triangular market square. Timber boat-houses project into the lake.

The southern end of the old market is delineated by an imposing 16th century house and the northern by the Roman Catholic parish church. Settlement spread out along the shores of the lake in both directions from the late 16th century onwards, to occupy its present-day territory.

The typical Hallstatt house is tall and narrow, making maximum use of the restricted space and the steep topography. The lower storeys are constructed in stone with barrel vaulting supporting timber-framed upper storeys, as is customary in the Alpine region. Only a few preserve the original flat saddleback roofs covered with wooden planks or shingles.

The southern part of the town, known as In der Lahn, located at the mouth of the Echterntal, is largely of 18th century date, much of it built after the 1750 fire. Among the more notable buildings are the Calvary Chapel (1711), the Baroque almshouses and chapel (1713), which today house the mine administration, and the imposing mine office (1751). The Echterntal, which extends above the Lahn quarter, is intensively farmed.

*St Mary's Roman Catholic Parish Church* stands on a site used for this purpose since the 12th century. It was built in the late 15th century to replace an earlier Romanesque structure, parts of which survive. Having suffered only slight damage during the 1750 fire its only Baroque features are the roof and the multi-tiered spire. It contains a number of outstanding works of art, including a Late Gothic altarpiece from the Astl workshop.

The small *St Michael's Chapel and Charnel House* is a Gothic structure in the tiny graveyard immediately north of the parish church. Its basement, viewable at ground level, contains a neatly arranged assemblage of human skulls and long bones, the skulls being marked with names and other details of the deceased. Purely practical considerations dictate this procedure: since the graveyard cannot expand, the skeletal material is regularly removed from the few graves when they need to be used again.

Other religious buildings are the small Baroque *Mount of Olives Chapel*, the outstanding *Calvary Chapel* of similar date in the Lahn quarter, and the mid 19th century neo-Gothic *Protestant Parish Church*.

The three-storeyed *Rudolfsturm* on the wooded summit of the 863m Humberkogel was built in the late 13th century to protect the salt-workings in the valley below. It also served as the office of the

*Berghauptmann* (Regional Inspector of Mines) from the late Middle Ages until the present century.

The *Mine Administration Building* constructed in the Lahn quarter alongside the Calvary Chapel after the 1750 fire is a stately Baroque structure.

The *Dachstein mountains*, rising to nearly 3000m, form the highest of the karst massifs in the northern limestone Alps. They are notable for the large number of caves they contain, the longest being the Hillatzhöhle (81km). Three of the caves are open to the public. Each is speleologically different, but the fact that they enjoy single management allows a range of information and experience to be made available in a coherent programme of conservation, accessibility, and interpretation. The *Dachstein-Rieseneishöhle* is the most impressive ice cave in Austria. The *Dachstein-Mamuthöhle*, at 50km the third longest explored cave in Austria, has enormous passageways and labyrinths, whilst the *Koppenbrüllerhöhle* is an active water cave located in a valley.

The Dachstein massif covers some 574km<sup>2</sup> and is exceptional among Alpine karstic areas for retaining its glaciation. Its landscape takes eight distinct forms:

- 1 the valley bottoms of the Train, Gosau, and Enns rivers, which have been exploited by humans since prehistory for settlement and farming;
- 2 the lakes and small ponds in the Koppenwinkel and between the two Gosau lakes;
- 3 the precipitous northern flanks of the massif;
- 4 the plateau (average height 1850m);
- 5 the peaks framing the southern edge of the plateau;
- 6 the impressive southern cliffs of the massif;
- 7 the glaciers and their moraines;
- 8 the moors in the Gosau-Hallstatt region.

Each of these zones has its own distinct climate and hence a characteristic flora and fauna. The forests of the Salzkammergut have been managed intensively for centuries, to supply the salt industry, though systematic regeneration was not practised until 1766. The sub-alpine and alpine meadows support a well recorded range of appropriate plants, some of which are currently extending their montane range at their upper limits as the glacial edges retreat.

The higher pastures have been used for the summer grazing of sheep and cattle since prehistoric times as part of the process of transhumance which, still today, gives the valley communities rights of access to specific grazing areas high in the mountains. There is evidence that dairy farming began on the higher pastures as early as the Bronze Age, but climatic deterioration in the early 18th century led to its abandonment.

Among the mammalian fauna are red deer, roe deer, chamois, and alpine white hare. Of especial importance is the group of breeding birds on the Dachstein plateau, unique to the Alps in their central

European dispersal area, including the rock ptarmigan (*Lagopus mutus*), ring ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*), water pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*), Alpine accentor (*Prunella collaris*), and snow finch (*Montifringilla nivalis*). There is also a rich diversity of reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and insects in the region, attributable to the inaccessibility of a large part of it.

## Management and Protection

### *Legal status*

The area proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List is accorded protection under the provisions of a range of federal, provincial, and municipal legislative instruments. Individual buildings and archaeological sites are protected under the 1923 Austrian Monument Protection Act (as amended in 1978 and 1990), when designated by the Federal Monuments Office (*Bundesdenkmalamt*).

The townscape regulations, building codes, and spatial planning provisions of the Province of Upper Austria regulate all forms of building and development within the cultural landscape.

Matters relating to nature conservation and their funding are administered jointly by federal and provincial authorities, by means of the federal 1959 Water Act and the 1975 Forestry Act.

Comprehensive protection of the nominated cultural landscape is subject to the 1995 Upper Austrian Nature and Landscape Conservation Act. This designates landscape conservation zones, protected parts of landscapes, nature reserves, and individual natural sites.

Provincial Regulation No 25/1963 declares the central karst mountains of the Dachstein group, with their glaciers, barren land, and high alpine flora, to be a nature reserve. The Koppenwinkel and the Gosau lakes have also been declared nature reserves by regulation. Similar protection is afforded to those parts of the buffer zone lying within their territories by the 1993 Salzburg Nature Conservation Act and the 1976 Styrian Nature Conservation Act.

At the international level, general principles and measures for protecting the cultural landscape as a whole are laid down in the 1991 Alps Convention, which has been ratified by Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland.

### *Management*

The various components of the nominated landscape are in federal, provincial, municipal, and private ownership.

The right of public use of natural space in Austria is guaranteed in law. This has created an historical awareness on the part of the population at large, who have become actively involved in the maintenance of landscapes, original settings, and architectural traditions.

In addition, there is a comprehensive regional management plan which prevents further undesirable

development of mass tourism and the creation of threats to the mountain landscape.

The provincial governments of Upper Austria, Salzburg, and Styria are bound by their relevant legal and technical instruments to ensure good management and to provide financial assistance. Officers of the three governments are now meeting to develop co-operative arrangements over the whole of the proposed World Heritage site and strengthen the mechanisms of public participation within it.

The buffer zone around the nominated area is in general adequate to protect its setting, but further consideration is likely to suggest a small but visually significant addition in the north-west.

## Conservation and Authenticity

### *Conservation history*

As a Crown estate the region was strictly managed from the 16th to the 20th century. With the decline of the salt industry in the mid 19th century, the development of the region for cultural and aesthetic tourism has ensured that it has retained its essential character. The archaeological areas have been studied and recorded for 150 years and protected by legislation, whilst the character of the town of Hallstatt has been and continues to be jealously guarded by its citizens as well as the relevant provincial and municipal authorities. This is well illustrated by the refusal of consent for the construction of a main road along the lake-shore and current consideration of other measures to limit vehicular traffic within the town.

The main concern in conservation and other terms at the present time is the outcome of the privatization of the salt mine. At the time of the ICOMOS expert mission (December 1996) there was considerable uncertainty about what would happen when four centuries of Royal and State management of the mine and its surroundings comes to an end.

### *Authenticity*

Because of its special historical evolution, this cultural landscape has retained a degree of cultural authenticity and natural integrity that is remarkable for the Alpine region. It has preserved its spatial and material structure, resulting from the interaction of man and nature, to an exceptional degree.

## Evaluation

### *Action by ICOMOS*

An ICOMOS expert mission visited the property in December 1996, on behalf of both Advisory Bodies

### *Qualities*

The nominated cultural landscape is one of visual drama, with huge mountains rising abruptly from narrow valleys. It is a landscape to appeal to "Gothic" fantasy, hostile yet beautiful. Nature dominates, from the deep lakes to the permanent glaciers high above, yet humankind has inhabited the valleys here for over

three millennia, eking out a living from the traditional natural resources of valley and montane pasture but flourishing at Hallstatt from extracting salt from the Salzberg, the "salt mountain." Although the human impact appears to be relatively slight on such an immense landscape, use of the wider landscape by farmer-miners over the centuries has modified it to a considerable degree, whilst mining has transformed the interior of the mountain. It is the presence of salt, a natural resource essential to human and animal life, which has made this place different, with a profound association between intensive human activity in the midst of a largely untamed landscape.

#### *Comparative analysis*

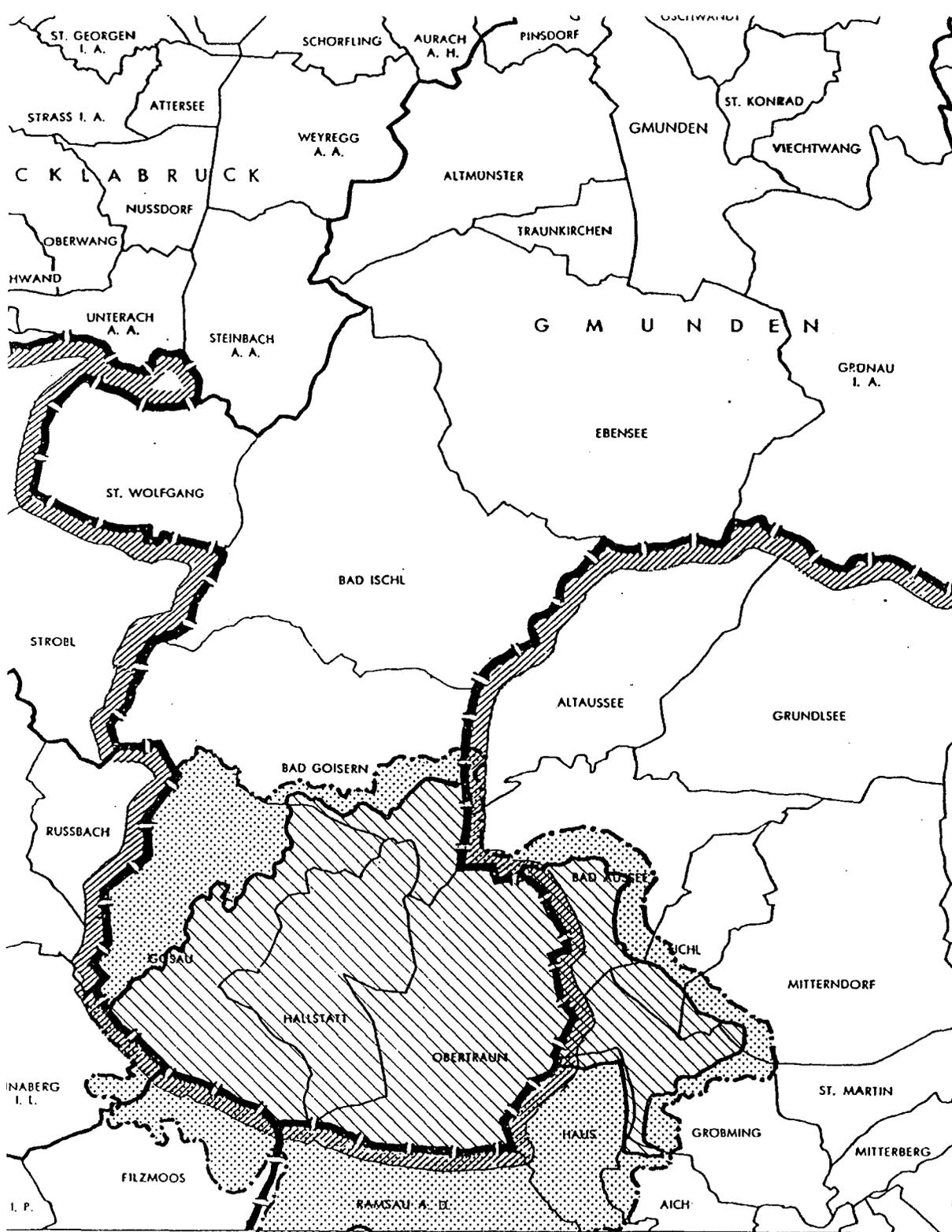
The Alpine region contains many fine cultural landscapes. However, the Hallstatt-Dachstein landscape is exceptional for the way in which it has played a vital role in human history for several millennia. The evidence for this has been strikingly preserved below and above ground in a unique complex of great scientific interest as well as immense natural power.

#### **Recommendation**

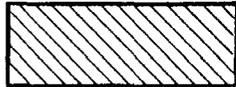
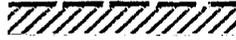
That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria iii and iv*:

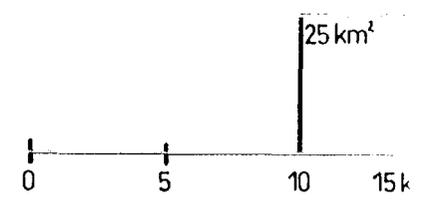
The Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut alpine region is an outstanding example of a natural landscape of great beauty and scientific interest which also contains evidence of a fundamental human economic activity, the whole integrated in a harmonious and mutually beneficial manner.

ICOMOS, September 1997



# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE HALLSTATT – DACHSTEIN / SALZKAMMERGUT

-  BOUNDARY OF THE PROPOSED ZONE FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LISTE
-  BOUNDARY OF THE BUFFERZONE
-  BORDER OF THE FEDERAL PROVINCES
-  BORDER OF THE DISTRICTS
-  BORDER OF THE COMMUNITIES



	Oberösterreich	Steiermark	Salzburg
zone km <sup>2</sup>	233,908	50,554	
bufferzone km <sup>2</sup>	54,803	119,626	25,710

**Hallstatt :**  
**Carte du paysage culturel de Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut /**  
**Map of HallstattDachstein/Salzkammergut cultural landscape**