

Abbreviated Summary of Experts' Meeting

"Heritage Potential of Sites of Aerospace History"

Berlin (Germany), 6 - 8 April 2017

An International Experts' Meeting "Heritage Potential of Sites of the History of Aerospace" took place from 6 to 8 April 2017 in the German Technical Museum Berlin with the aim of promoting the informal exchange among 26 experts from six countries (France, Germany, India, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom). Invited experts from other countries were unable to attend. The experts discussed different sites related to the history of aerospace in their countries, in a long-term perspective as for their suitability for potential future transnational serial nominations as World Heritage sites. The organizers were: ICOMOS Germany, German Commission for UNESCO, German Aerospace Center, TICCIH Germany and the Foundation of the German Technical Museum Berlin.

All participants spoke on their own behalf, consciously stressing that any further considerations or processes would need to be done in consultation with the competent authorities. Still, the workshop resulted in very interesting perspectives.

A key theme emphasized by most participants was the importance of aerospace sites for connecting the globe and humankind, despite military aspects – and thus a key reason for possible transnational serial nominations. Still, military use, relation to war and forced labor are also part of the “dark” history of aerospace technology, which needs to be documented and communicated transparently. It was suggested to promote ideas for separate individual typologies of sites of aerospace history: early airports, aerodynamic test facilities, launch sites, early earth/ground stations.

Such sites have a conceptual connection to UNESCO's initiative “Astronomy and World Heritage” and to already inscribed properties related to the history of technology and engineering. Several experts discussed sites which are already inscribed on the tentative lists of their countries of origin, as well as suitable national and/or international extensions of these sites. They discussed the sometimes difficult conservation and property questions of several sites, their failure of yet being recognized as heritage and their potential outstanding universal value. Experts also generally agreed on the value of transnational nominations, according to different typologies of sites. However this requires a long-term perspective, which is anyhow needed in view of established tentative lists.

For practical reasons, *aerodynamic test facilities* and *early earth/ground stations* seem to be the most promising typologies; as a first step, additional research is needed. A German NGO will embark on a first draft of a comparative *study on aerodynamic test facilities* in 2017, also as a reference for studies of other typologies. Additional expert consultations will be ongoing; a next expert meeting is foreseen for spring 2018. If discussions will become more concrete, a larger public (possibly political) conference could take place within the framework of the European Cultural Heritage Year 2018 or in 2019. Regardless of efforts towards potential World Heritage nominations, the participating experts also plan to explore further opportunities for cross-border cooperation in Europe, for example through the development of thematic routes or digital networks of aerospace sites, or through cooperation of monuments and sites of aerospace technology related to museums, exhibitions, collections and associations for an award with the European Heritage Label.