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World Heritage Patrimoine mondial

32 COM

Paris, 15 June / juin 2008
Original: English

Distribution limited / limitée

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES
POUR L'EDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

CONVENTION CONCERNANT LA PROTECTION DU PATRIMOINE
MONDIAL, CULTUREL ET NATUREL

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE / COMITE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

Thirty-second session / Trente-deuxième session

Quebec, Canada / Québec, Canada
2 – 10 July 2008 / 2 – 10 juillet 2008

Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and/or on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Point 7 de l'Ordre du jour provisoire: Etat de conservation de biens inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et/ou sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril

MISSION REPORT / RAPPORT DE MISSION

Upper Middle Rhine Valley (Germany) (C 1066) /
Vallée du Haut-Rhin moyen (Allemagne) (C 1066)

11 February 2008 / 11 février 2008

This mission report should be read in conjunction with Document:
Ce rapport de mission doit être lu conjointement avec le document suivant:

WHC-08/32.COM/7A

WHC-08/32.COM/7A.Add

WHC-08/32.COM/7B

WHC-08/32.COM/7B.Add

**REPORT ON THE ADVISORY MISSION TO THE UPPER MIDDLE RHINE VALLEY
(GERMANY)**

11 February 2008



Views on the Middle Rhin Valley from the Loreley's rock

The joint UNESCO ICOMOS mission was requested by the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate (letter from autumn 2007, without a date) with the aim to consider plans to build a **bridge over the Rhine** – or eventually a **tunnel** in the **World Heritage Site in the Upper Middle Rhine Valley** and took place on 11 February 2008.

The mission would like to gratefully acknowledge the support provided by the authorities and the arrangements made for the mission.

1. BACKGROUND OF THE MISSION

1.1 Inscription on the World Heritage List

In June 2002 at its 26th session, the World Heritage Committee included the property of the Upper Middle Rhine Valley (Germany) on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Upper Middle Rhine Valley

The inscription was based on criteria ii, iv and v:

Criterion (ii) As one of the most important transport routes in Europe, the Middle Rhine Valley has for two millennia facilitated the exchange of culture between the Mediterranean region and the north.

Criterion (iv) The Middle Rhine Valley is an outstanding organic cultural landscape, the present-day character of which is determined both by its geo-morphological and geological setting and by the human interventions, such as settlements, transport infrastructure, and land-use, that it has undergone over two thousand years.

Criterion (v) The Middle Rhine Valley is an outstanding example of an evolving traditional way of life and means of communication in a narrow river valley. The terracing of its steep slopes in particular has shaped the landscape in many ways for more than two millennia. However, this form of land-use is under threat from the socio-economic pressures of the present day.

Brief description

The 65 km-stretch of the Middle Rhine Valley, with its castles, historic towns and vineyards, graphically illustrated the long history of human involvement with a dramatic and varied natural landscape. It is intimately associated with history and legend and for centuries has exercised a powerful influence on writers, artists and composers.

1.2. Justification for the Advisory Mission

For a long time there have been discussions regarding the construction of a Rhine crossing in the Middle Rhine area (bridge, tunnel). These discussions were already under way at the time of the evaluation of the World Heritage nomination. In August 2007 an expertise was provided for revision of the plan for a Rhine crossing regarding economy and transportation by the Environmental, Urban and Transport Planning Company *Cochet Consult*, on behalf of the Land Rhineland-Palatinate and forwarded to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for review.

The Rhine crossing project is justified by the argument, that there is no bridge within a section of approximately 80 km between Mainz and Koblenz, therefore a river crossing is only possible by using existing ferries. The Rhine-crossing proposal is justified on reasons of

traffic, economical and social aspects and backed with relevant statistics. This transport link would primarily be of regional and local interest (connection between two rural districts), but would not have significance for a superior federal traffic concept. On the part of policy the Rhine crossing raises hopes to stimulate economy (impulse for transport) on both sides of the Rhine and to positively impact tourism.

The expertise analyses a number of possible locations and concludes that the best conditions and benefits for a Rhine crossing would be within the area St. Goar / Goarshausen – a region, which constitutes the core zone of the World Heritage property of the Middle Rhine Valley through a region of dense concentration of castles and historic monuments and remains (Rheinfels, Katz, Maus), the historic villages St. Goar, St. Goarshausen and the legendary Rhine Cliff.

The *Cochet Consult* expertise put forward **three bridge options, one tunnel option and an improved ferry option** for discussion (see expertise, page 27ff).

Taking into account paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre was asked by the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate to dispatch experts for an advisory mission to find a possible solution.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE - ICOMOS ADVISORY MISSION

The mission terms of reference, in response to the information transmitted and to the invitation made by the German authorities, were:

1. Carry out a joint World Heritage Centre–ICOMOS advisory mission, to the World Heritage property of the Upper Middle Rhine Valley, Germany, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2002, in order to¹:
2. Review the state of conservation of the property in its landscape context, its integrity and authenticity by taking into account paragraphs 79-95 of the *Operational Guidelines*,
3. Review the Rhine crossing project(s) proposed by the State Party in order to determine:
 - a) which particular solution is being considered (this should be supported by the relevant technical documentation to be provided by the State Party), if any;
 - b) Examine the impact on the outstanding universal value, integrity and authenticity of the World Heritage property of the proposal(s) which are being either considered for implementation or still under discussion (including the impacts of traffic, noise pollution in view of a possible construction for the Rhine crossing),
4. Meet with the local and regional authorities to discuss how the current construction proposal(s) may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the site;
5. Discuss with the relevant authorities, institutions and other stakeholders the protection of the cultural landscape and its visual integrity, according to paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*;
6. Take into account the provisions in the *Operational Guidelines*, in particular Chapter IV concerning reactive monitoring (paragraphs 169-176) and Danger Listing (paragraphs 177-191);

¹ See programme of the advisory mission in Annex 3

7. Prepare a concise joint ICOMOS UNESCO report with recommendations by **15 March 2008** at the latest, to be reviewed by the World Heritage Committee at its 32nd session in Quebec, Canada in July 2008.

3. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

3.1 Protected area legislation

The World Heritage property belongs to two regions; the Land of Hessen and Rhineland-Palatinate. The laws and provisions concerning monument protection and nature conservation and the legal basis concerned with planning at the regional and *Land* levels are covered by European law, German federal law, federal state law and legislation governing local authorities. The World Heritage site includes some 60 towns and communities. The majority of castles, cultural monuments and vineyards have always been privately owned. The cultural monuments between Bingen and Koblenz are protected by many laws and legal provisions. The Hessen law on monument protection (the *Denkmalschutzgesetz* or Monument Protection Act of 1986) provisionally protects all cultural monuments in Hessen, including its section of the Middle Rhine region. In Rhineland-Palatinate, all cultural monuments have been protected by the 1978 Monument Protection and Conservation Act.

The protection of the natural resources of the Middle Rhine Valley are ensured, among others, by the Federal Nature Conservation Act (*Bundesnaturschutzgesetz* dated 21 September 1998), the Hessen Nature Conservation Act of 16 April 1996 and the Law governing the preservation of natural resources in Rhineland-Palatinate dated 5 February 1979.

3.2 Management structure

On 21 October 1997 a registered association called the “Middle Rhine Valley Forum” was established. According to its statutes, the association’s purpose is to serve as a central point for the coordination and organization of future projects in the region. The main aim is for the local authorities and the associations and federations active in the Middle Rhine Valley to use the Middle Rhine Valley Forum as a basis for jointly taking up the relevant planning duties and addressing the relevant planning problems with stakeholders.

In order to protect and manage the cultural landscape of the Rhine Valley, a charter (*Rheintalcharta*) has been established in November 1997, including the conservation, management and appropriate development of natural and cultural heritage. By signing up to this Charter, the majority of communities of the Middle Rhine region have committed themselves to continue guaranteeing the authenticity and integrity of the cultural landscape.

Together with the county of Rheingau-Taunus and the towns of Lorch am Rhein and Rüdesheim am Rhein, the planning communities Middle Rhein-Westerwald and Rheinhessen-Nahe agreed to draw up a spatial planning analysis that is designed to fulfill the function of a management plan within a “management system” of the Operational Guidelines. This plan contains statements about various areas and projects with a view to future use and development of the Middle Rhine Valley.

4. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES

4.1 Factors affecting the property

The Rhine River and its valley have served as a link from southern Germany to the North Sea. The associated development of transport infrastructure (by water, road and rail) plays a fundamental role in the evolution and transformation of the Rhine valley and its history. According to the nomination dossier, the **railway lines** and **roads**, both as transport routes and sources of noise could be regarded as a nuisance. There have been cases confirmed by complaints by local inhabitants. To decrease noise pollution in the Middle Rhine Valley the two regional governments concerned have already started implementing a programme aimed at minimizing noise pollution generated by the railways.

A modern, sometimes intensive, **viticulture** is resulting in the loss of biotopes and the abandonment of traditional wine-growing or coppice forest management techniques. The discontinuation of forest management and the accumulation of undergrowth would impact on the variety of species and modify the visual aspects of the vineyard landscape.

Due to the limited potential area for new **housing developments** in the Middle Rhine Valley, the types of buildings erected have not always been satisfactory from the town-planning point of view or with respect to their integration into the landscape.

It should be noted that many areas not under flood protection along the Middle Rhine constantly face the threat of **flooding**. An Action Plan on Flood Protection, adopted in 1998, is intended to provide the banks of the Rhine with better protection against flooding. Because the topography and geology of the Middle Rhine region does not permit preventive flood defense measures such as the reclaiming of retention areas, the inhabitants of the region have to live with this eventuality and prevent major damage by taking their own precautions.

According to the high cultural and recreation values of this region, the authorities are promoting a long-term concept for **tourism**. One strategic approach also being taken in the Rhine Valley consists of expanding sustainable forms of eco-tourism and measures regarding landscape interpretation (bicycle tourism, tourist accommodation in vineyards and on farms).

The advisory mission is of the opinion that the present development of tourism within the valley does not affect the values of the property, but that sustainable tourism must be further developed in order to reduce traffic impacts created by tourists visiting the valley just for one day.

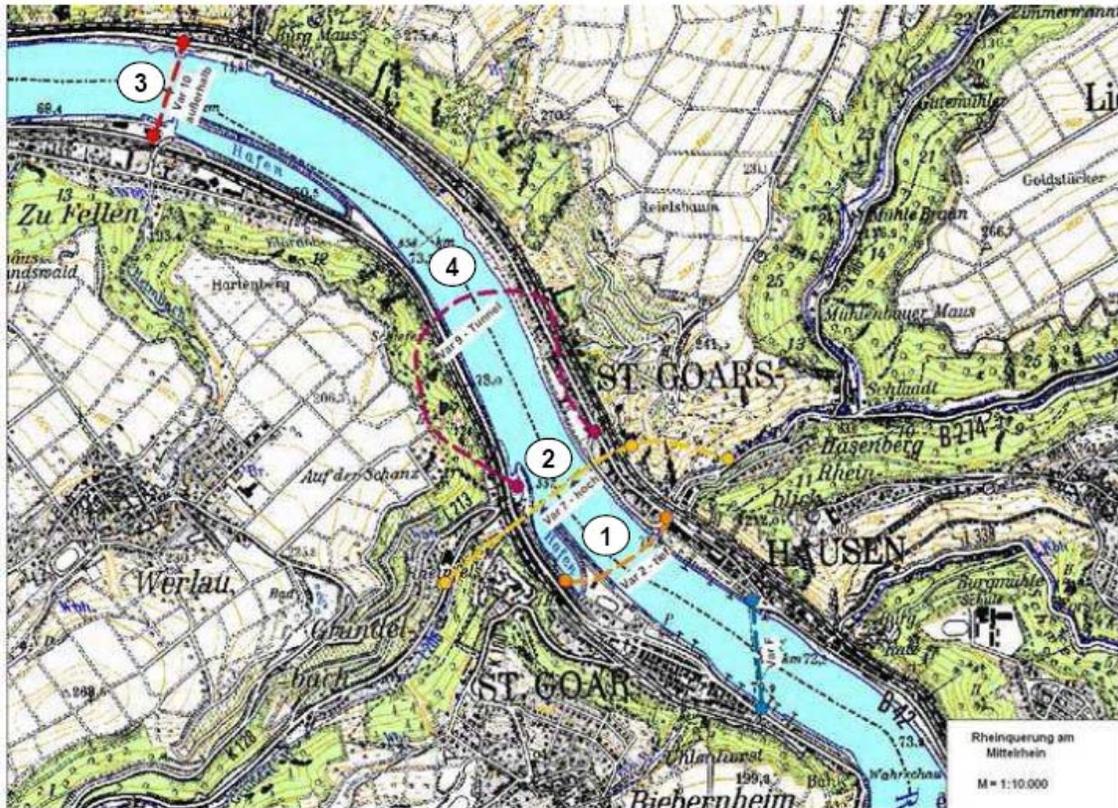
5. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE SITE

In the course of the mission there was little opportunity to review the state of conservation of the property in its landscape context, its integrity and authenticity. However, it is noted that since its inscription there have been no major detrimental changes in the visited section St. Goar / St. Goarshausen, Fellen – Wellmich, the castles called "Maus", "Katz" and "Rheinfels" and the "Loreley".

The mission focused on the river crossing proposals, and reviewed whether the project(s) may have an impact on the values on the basis of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The *Cochet Consult* expertise, from August 2007, put **three bridge options, one tunnel option** and the **ferry option** up for discussion (see Annex 4 for precise localization):

- **(1) low bridge option** (St. Goar / St. Goarshausen) (see expertise *Cochet Consult* 9.2.2., p. 41)
- **(2) high bridge option** (St. Goar / St. Goarshausen) (see expertise *Cochet Consult* 9.2.3., p. 44)
- **(3) low bridge outside town option** (Wellmich-Fellen) (see expertise *Cochet Consult* 9.2.5., p. 48)
- **(4) tunnel option** (St. Goar / St. Goarshausen) (see expertise *Cochet Consult* 9.2.4., p. 48)
- **ferry option** (see expertise *Cochet Consult* 9.2.1., p. 37)



Localisation of crossing options (illustrations taken from the Impact study, *Cochet Consult* August 2007)

According to the expertise and to the presentation made by the authorities during the mission, the **State Party ruled out two options** because of the negative effects on the cultural landscape of the World Heritage Site, already mentioned in the expertise: **the low bridge option and the high bridge option (St.Goar / St. Goarshausen)**. The ferry option was not considered by the State Party as a fixed structure for the Rhine crossing (bridge or tunnel) was preferred from the start.

5.1 Findings of the mission

It is important to point out that the evaluation made by ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre experts during the joint mission differed for the bridge option. **In Section 5 and Section 6 these two views are set out separately for the bridge option. For the tunnel and ferry options, a combined view is set out.**

5.1.1 Review of Rhine crossing options

a) Tunnel option

The mission agreed that the tunnel option will **not disrupt the landscape and visual integrity**, and the junctions (east of Rhine directly to B274, west of Rhine to L208) are possible. Traffic connections are no problem – east of Rhine via B274 eastbound or via B42 along the Rhine. West of Rhine the tunnel junction to A61 (and to the Airport Frankfurt-Hahn, which is important to cargo) via St Goar, along Rheinfels Castle via K100 highly problematic (if possible at all for lorries etc.), the same applies to the L208 (without extension), here conflicts with nature conservation could be expected.

If the tunnel option is to be considered (which would be visually absolutely acceptable), a **clarification of transport connection to the A61 is necessary** – detrimental consequences for landscape might occur.

The problems mentioned above were discussed with the relevant authorities in the Ministry and during the site visit (see programme, Annex 3).

It is the opinion of the expert mission that the **traffic** scheme for the World Heritage property should be improved and solutions need to be found to minimize the nuisances. To the east of the Rhine there is the B42, to the west of the Rhine the B9. While the traffic connection at the east of the Rhine eastbound of St Goarshausen via B274 is relatively good, the traffic situation to the west of the Rhine from B9 westbound to the high plateau and A61 via K100 is narrow and steep within St. Goar and eases after approximately 3km; an alternative is a link via L208, which is also rather narrow and serpentine, leading through one of the typically - with regards to characteristic side valleys.

b) The ferry option

The existing ferries play an important role in the activities of this region and embody the special relation the inhabitants and the tourists may have to this site. Therefore, the ferry should be maintained in particular for local and tourism purposes. Possible efforts could be invested to optimize this system and to adjust the frequency and the operating time according to demand (i.e. night hours).

c) The low bridge outside town option (Wellmich-Fellen)

i) UNESCO's views

In case the crossing options mentioned above (tunnel and ferry) are not possible for technical or others particular reasons, the State Party could consider building a bridge. However, this potential bridge proposal needs to take into account the outstanding universal value of the property, as inscribed by the World Heritage Committee in 2002. That means any development has to be seen in the context of the outstanding universal value recognized by the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription.

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It is important to point out that the property was inscribed as a cultural landscape, as enhancing a combined works of nature and of man. This cultural landscape is an illustration of the evolution of the society with the influence of physical constraints. For the Middle Rhine Valley, this strong interaction is underlined with **criterion (iv)** "the Middle Rhine Valley is an outstanding organic cultural landscape, the present-day character of which is determined both by **its geo-morphological and geological setting** and by the human interventions, such as settlements, transport infrastructure, and land-use, that it has undergone over two thousand years". Interventions made by the inhabitants gave the specific value to this landscape, by modifying the natural environment and setting created by the Rhine River. The inscription of the Rhine Valley on the World Heritage List recognised the qualities of the human interventions. As the Rhine Valley is an evolving landscape, further interventions are to be considered if they respect the qualities of the site. The geomorphology of the Middle Rhine Valley, moreover, is such that the river has over the centuries created a natural landscape of great beauty which has strongly influenced artists of all kinds – poets, painters, and composers – over the past two centuries. The valley landscape begins to change at Oberwesel with the transition from soft clay-slates to hard sandstone. The result is a series of narrows, the most famous of which is the **Loreley**, no more than 130m wide (and at 20m the deepest section of the Middle Rhine). This stretch of river was once hazardous for shipping, whence the legend, and is reputed to be the place where the fabulous treasure of the Nibelungs lies hidden. It should be pointed out the core zone of the Middle Rhine Valley needs extraordinarily sensitive dealings, leaving out any disturbing interference

Considering the size and the structure of the Rhine Valley, the views from and to the opposite banks of the river are very important. The scale of the valley is expressed with **criterion (v)** "the Middle Rhine Valley is an outstanding example of an evolving traditional way of life and means of communication in a narrow river valley. The terracing of its steep slopes in particular has shaped the landscape in many ways for more than two millennia. However, this form of land-use is under threat from the socio-economic pressures of the present day". The preservation of the important views is essential, but the location of the proposed bridge for Wellmich-Fellen ensures that the visual impact on such a crossing construction is minimized, due to the shape of the river. The bridge project would take place in one of the meander of the Rhine, preserving important and larger views (in particular to and from the Lorelei rock). In addition, the bridge as it is proposed could be easily connected to the existing roads, in particular to the left bank of the Rhine where an elevated infrastructure for the traffic road is already in place. However, further information on the technical solution should be developed, regarding the road connections and their integration within the scale of this outstanding landscape.

The mission recalled that this section of the upper middle Rhine Valley is one of the most important parts of this World Heritage site with the castles: „Burg Rheinfels“, „Burg Maus“, „Burg Katz“ , the „Rhine Cliff Loreley“ and the historic villages of St. Goar and St. Goarshausen. This site with its unique cultural landscape and high density of architectural monuments and settlements in general shows a high level of integrity, but has already been negatively affected as a result of the roads and railroad tracks on both sides of the Rhine River. This has already suffered as a result with a high level of emission, pollution and noise.

The increasing density of traffic both on the road and on the railway tracks has become a challenge. The visual impact has already been impaired by these transportation routes. With the steadily rising number of cars and trains the area is becoming alarmingly affected. It should be demonstrated by further studies that the proposed bridge would not have a supplementary impact the existing site.

The planned bridge „Fellen – Wellmich“ would be constructed in the direct vicinity of Burg Maus and Burg Rheinfels and with St. Goar and St. Goarshausen somewhat further in the distance. There is no visual connection with the Rhine Cliff Loreley. The proposed low bridge option would have to take into account the technical requirements and regulations for waterways and transportation by ships. However, at this stage of the bridge project, the expertise by the German authorities only focused on the location of the potential crossing. The bridge proposal should demonstrate that there is no break of scale and materials of the future construction in comparison to the existing elements of the World Heritage property (castles, villages). Further information on the design and materials used of a potential bridge, as well as a full environmental and visual impact study, should be provided in order to evaluate the potential impacts on the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage property.

ii) ICOMOS's views

As stated in the ICOMOS evaluation of the property in April 2002, the qualities of the World Heritage area are described as follows (excerpt):

"...The Rhine is one of the world's great rivers and has witnessed many crucial events in human history. The stretch of the Middle Rhine Valley between Bingen and Koblenz is in many ways an exceptional expression of this long history. It is a cultural landscape that has been fashioned by humankind over many centuries and its present form and structure derive from human interventions conditioned by the cultural and political evolution of Western Europe. The geomorphology of the Middle Rhine Valley, moreover, is such that the river has over the centuries created a natural landscape of great beauty which has strongly influenced artists of all kinds – poets, painters, and composers – over the past two centuries...."

"...The Middle Rhine Valley is a cultural landscape of great diversity and beauty which has shaped both by nature and by human intervention. It is rich in cultural associations, both historical and artistic, which are imprinted upon the present-day landscape..."

Furthermore the characteristics in the inscribed area are specified:

*"...The valley landscape begins to change at Oberwesel with the transition from soft clay-slates to hard sandstone. The result is a series of narrows, the most famous of which is the **Loreley**, no more than 130m wide (and at 20m the deepest section of the Middle Rhine). This stretch of river was once hazardous for shipping, whence the legend, and is reputed to be the place where the fabulous treasure of the Nibelungs lies hidden.*

*The oldest part of the parish church of **St Goar**, the seat of the Counts of Katzenelnbogen (later Margraves of Hesse), is a vast 11th century three-aisled crypt. The nave was rebuilt in the mid 15th century and is a high point in the architectural history of the Middle Rhine Valley. Nearby is the magnificent ruin of **Burg Rheinfels**, one of the finest on the Rhine; the earliest part of this castle dates from the 14th century, and it was reconstructed in the 15th and 16th centuries. Across the river on the right bank is **St Goarshausen**, with its castle of Neu-Katzenelnbogen (familarly known as **Burg Katz**). The third Katzenelnbogen fortress is Burg Reichenberg, still immensely impressive despite its ruined condition. Its*

*design suggests that it may have been inspired by Crusader fortresses in Syria and Palestine. A short distance downstream on the right bank is the fortress of Peterseck built by the Elector of Trier to protect his lands against the Counts of Katzenelnbogen. Later renamed Deuternberg, it is now known as **Burg Maus**. It was one of the most advanced fortresses of its day..."*

From these characteristics and descriptions, it is clear that the section discussed represents the core zone of the Middle Rhine Valley World Heritage property, which needs extraordinarily sensitive conservation without any disturbing interference. This section with its unique cultural landscape and high density of architectural monuments and settlements in general shows a high level of integrity, but has already been negatively affected as a result of the roads and railroad tracks on both sides of the Rhine River, which has brought a high level of emissions, pollution and noise. The increasing density of traffic both on the road and on the railway tracks has become a challenge. The visual qualities have already been impaired by these transportation routes. With the steadily rising number of cars and trains, the area is becoming affected alarmingly.

The proposed bridge „Fellen – Wellmich“ would be constructed in the direct vicinity of Burg Maus and Burg Rheinfels and with St. Goar and St. Goarshausen somewhat further in the distance. There is no visual connection with the Rhine Cliff Loreley. The planned bridge is a technical structure that complies with the regulations necessary for waterways and transportation by ships. This inherently means a break in scale in comparison to the differentiated structures of the historic castles and villages, but also of the small-sized cultural landscape. This also means a break in material and form and the bridge would appear in the landscape as an „alien element“.

These factors culminating in a severe break of scale, material and form must be considered with respect to the outstanding universal value for which the area was listed as a World Heritage site. The Rhine Valley, is an exemplary landscape for the ideas associated with the Romantic period, and – one might say – is a visual paradigm of Romanticism. An evaluation of the planned structure must therefore be based on the criteria that led to the improvement of the landscape during the Romantic period.

Beginning with the basic and fundamental ideals of the Romantic period in England in the early 18th century, Romantic ideas revolved around the key terms "nature and beauty". The philosophy of variety within a complimenting unity became one of the guiding principles: "unity in variety" forming an integrated whole. (comp F. Hutcheson: „... *Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 1726") The sublime, the wonderful, the fair and the beautiful were differentiated in this context (comp. M. Akenside „*The Pleasures of Imagination*, 1744). These terms are associated with specific formal appearances in W. Hogarth's „*Analysis of Beauty*“ 1753, in which beauty is defined as a whole containing elements expressed in „swelling figures“ which result in movement and rhythm. Accordingly Hogarth's philosophy and sense of Romanticism were guided by the principles of „Fitness, Variety, Uniformity, Simplicity, Intricacy and Quantity“.

In the German views of Romanticism all the qualities of the Rhine Valley landscape were perceived together with the architectural witnesses of history in the "Ruins of Ancient Splendor" by J. Addison. The qualities listed above all applied to this outstanding location.

It should be absolutely clear and there can be no doubt that any alterations such as the erection of a modern bridge in the core of the World Heritage site would ruin the outstanding universal values which are inseparably connected with the Romantic perception of this landscape. A technical structure amidst the paradigm of a Romantic landscape would stand in total opposition to the Romantic view of nature – as expressed in William Kent's "Dictum of the 18th century: "Nature Abhors the Straight Line".

The oppressively large structure would not blend in with the surroundings, thus remaining a bad lesson pointing to its shortcomings that cannot be disguised. The harm done to this unique landscape would impact adversely on the outstanding universal value of the area.

In addition the bridge would make the already difficult traffic conditions and pollution worse.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the five Rhine crossing projects, presented by *Cochet Consult*, the German authorities decided to consider only the **low bridge outside town option**, located in Wellmich-Fellen (see expertise *Cochet Consult* 9.2.5., p. 48 and Annex 4 of this report).

The **tunnel option** between St. Goar / St. Goarshausen (see expertise *Cochet Consult* 9.2.4., p. 48), as well as the **ferry option** (expertise *Cochet Consult* 9.2.1., p. 37) were also presented and evaluated.

The **low bridge** and the **high bridge option St. Goar / St. Goarshausen** were **eliminated by the Ministry** because of its incompatibility with the World Heritage property and its values.

Conclusion on the tunnel option

The mission agreed that the **tunnel option** has **no negative visual or aesthetic consequences** and **does not disturb the visual integrity**. The **difficult transport links and the increasing traffic problems** have to be solved with respect to the environmental consequences before any further consideration about realization.

Conclusion on the ferry option

The existing **Ferry option could be maintained**. **Possible efforts** could be invested to **optimize this system** and to **adjust the frequency** and the operating time **according to demand** (i.e. night hours).

According to the expertise and the presentation made during the mission, this ferry crossing option may depend on the various natural elements, like floods, low water and bad weather. The increase of ferry crossings could conflict with the increase of shipping traffic along the Rhine and regular commercial shipping lines. An improvement scheme for the ferries should be studied, in particular considering late fares (evenings in particular during tourism season)

Separate conclusions on the bridge option:

i) UNESCO's views:

The low bridge outside town option (Wellmich –Fellen), if decided by the State Party, has to demonstrate that the crossing proposal will not affect **the authenticity and visual integrity** of this very important part of the World Heritage property.

Additionally, the difficult and **unsolved transport links** and the **increasing traffic volume** and **air pollution** have to be addressed.

In case such a bridge option would be considered by the authorities between Wellmich and Fellen, this proposal should be prepared within the framework of an **international design competition** where the values of the World Heritage site are clearly identified and the need to use adapted and integrated materials in relation with the existing elements of the site is clearly integrated.

This potential bridge proposal has to be supported by an **in-depth environmental, cultural and visual impact study**, based on the proposed design. At this stage of the evaluation, the study made in 2007 by the German authorities cannot be considered to be sufficient.

ii) ICOMOS's views

The low bridge outside town option (Wellmich –Fellen) is contradictory to the “spirit” of this area which is an outstanding paradigm of a Romantic landscape. Thus the project would impact adversely on the justification for criteria iv “...patchwork of small natural places...” **and affect the authenticity and visual integrity** of this very important part of the World Heritage site.

The low bridge outside town option (Wellmich-Fellen) is not a question of design or material but a question of authenticity and visual integrity of the most important part of the Rhine Valley World Heritage Site. This question certainly can not be solved by an international design competition.

Additionally, the difficult and **unsolved transport links** and the **increasing traffic volume** and **air pollution** are further reasons against the bridge solution.

Final conclusions and recommendations

The Mission recommends that the State Party **further explores the option of constructing a tunnel, as this option is perceived as most likely to respect the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage property.** This tunnel option should be considered in the context of an appraisal of the long-term transportation capacity of the valley, and its environmental impacts with a view to developing a long-term transportation policy which respects the sensitivities of the cultural landscape.

An environmental impact study and an overall traffic and transport study for the World Heritage property should be carried out. It will be transmitted for review to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies of the *World Heritage Convention*, ICOMOS and IUCN.

In case the impact studies have demonstrated that the tunnel is technically not feasible, the authorities should explore other options that would respect the integrity and the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage property.

Annex 1: Members of the joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS mission

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Prof. Dr. Wilfried Lipp, ICOMOS (Austria)

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Staatsminister Hendrik Hering

Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Verkehr, Landwirtschaft und Weinbau Rheinland-Pfalz

State Secretary Prof. Dr. Siegfried Englert

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District President Günther Kern

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Landrat Günther Kern

Landkreis Rhein-Lahn

Hans-Georg Schneider, Head of Tourist Department

Ministry of Economy, Transport, Agriculture and Viniculture Rhineland-Palatinate

Hans-Georg Schneider, Leiter der Abteilung Tourismus

Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Verkehr, Landwirtschaft und Weinbau Rheinland-Pfalz

Dr. Lothar Kaufmann, Head of Transport Department

Ministry of Economy, Transport, Agriculture and Viniculture Rhineland-Palatinate

Dr. Lothar Kaufmann, Leiter der Abteilung Verkehr

Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Verkehr, Landwirtschaft und Weinbau Rheinland-Pfalz

Thomas Metz, Director of Directorate General

Directorate-General for the Cultural Heritage in Rhineland-Palatinate

Thomas Metz, Direktor der Generaldirektion Kulturelles Erbe

Generaldirektion Kulturelles Erbe Rheinland-Pfalz

Dr. Christian Schüler-Beigang, Head of Office

Office for the World Heritage in Rhineland-Palatinate

Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Culture Rhineland-Palatinate

Dr. Christian Schüler-Beigang

Sekretariat für das Welterbe in Rheinland-Pfalz

Ministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft, Jugend und Kultur Rheinland-Pfalz

Annex 3: Program of the advisory mission

10 Feb. 2008

18:15 Meet Mr Schüler-Beigang and transfer to the hotel

Dinner with Mr Schüler-Beigang und Ms Céline Fuchs

11 Feb. 2008

8:15 Meet Prof. Dr. Wilfried Lipp and Ms Céline Fuchs at City Hilton Hotel in Mainz

8:30 Reception by Minister Hering, Mainz (assisted by Mr. Hugo, Syntax as interpreter)

9:00 Power Point Presentation of "Middle Rhine..... " project by Minister Hering in Mainz, room "Rheinhessen" Minister for Economy, Transport, Agriculture and Viniculture (MWVLW)

Followed by excursion to the relevant places

Transfer by bus from Mainz via Bingen to St. Goar (participants Prof. Dr. Hofmann-Göttig and Dr. Englert among others)

Visit of possible position of tunnel portal (left side of Rhine) in St. Goar

Travel to Fellen (left side of Rhine) for visiting the place of the bridge project Fellen/Wellmich

Transfer by ferry to St. Goarshausen

Boat trip on Rhine to evaluate the possible visual impact of the bridge project Wellmich/Fellen

Visit to the Loreley plateau

Transfer by bus to the site of the portal of tunnel project in St. Goarshausen (right side of Rhine)

Transfer to Wellmich (right side of Rhine) to see the possible location of the bridge project Fellen/Wellmich

Transfer to ferry to St. Goar

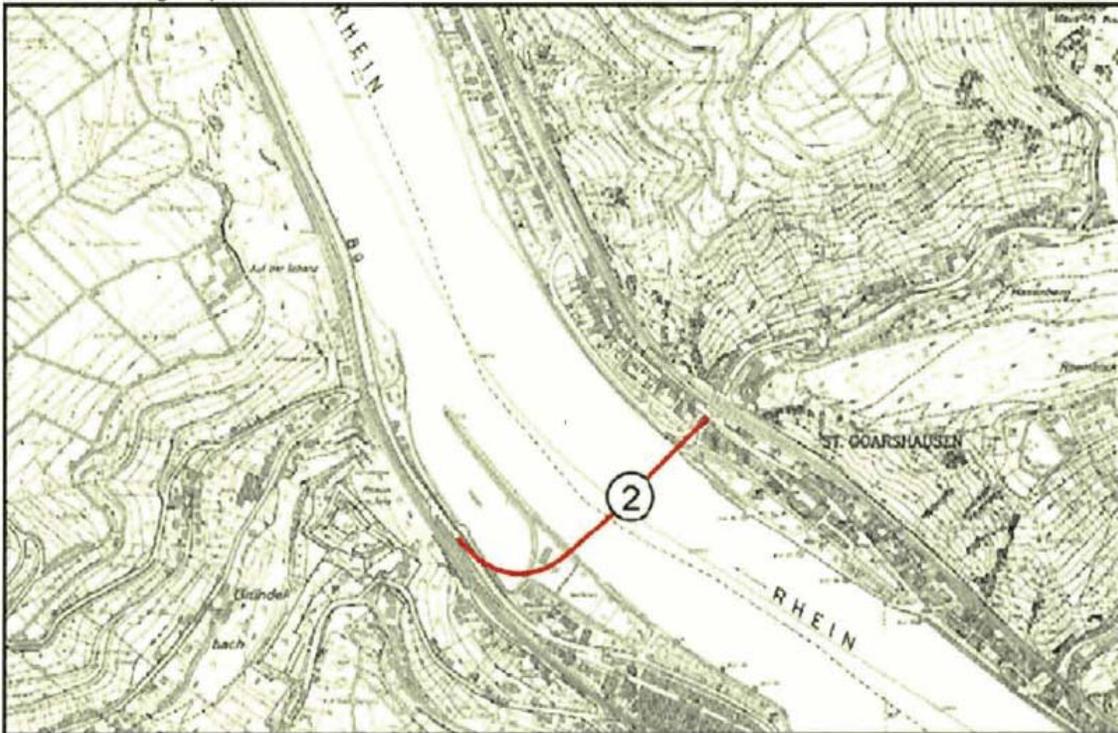
Transfer by bus to Hotel Restaurant "Rheinfels"

Business lunch and then discussion in St. Goar with Minister Hering and all relevant representatives at Hotel Restaurant Rheinfels

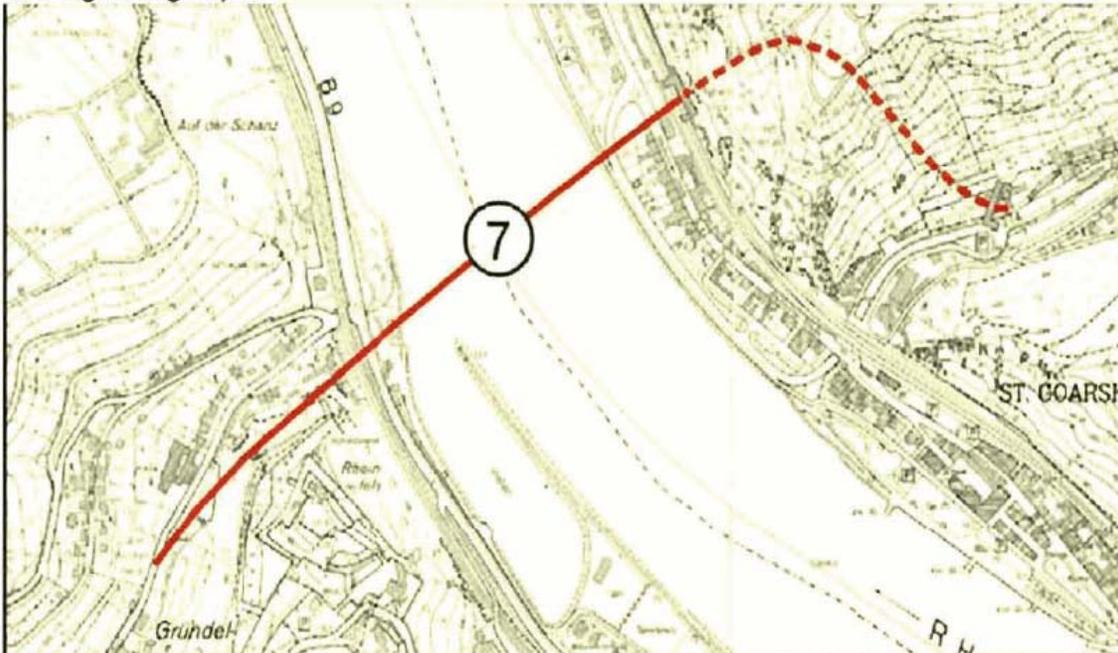
Transfer by bus to visit the cultural landscape project Oberwesel Oelsberg, back to Mainz and end of mission

Annex 4: Location bridge proposals

The low bridge option



The high bridge option



The tunnel option (tunnel portals sited to free the structure from high-water constraints)



The low bridge outside town option

