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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL
AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-seventh session
UNESCO Headquarters, Room XII
30 June - 5 July 2003

Item 7B of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of properties inscribed on the
World Heritage List

**Joint UNESCO-ICOMOS Mission to the Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of
Kotor (Serbia and Montenegro), from 26 March to 3 April 2003**

SUMMARY

The Committee may wish to take note of the full report of the Joint UNESCO-ICOMOS Mission to the Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor (Serbia and Montenegro), which was carried out at the request of the Committee (26 COM 21 (a) 17) from 26 March to 3 April 2003.

The draft decision (**Draft 27 COM 7 (a) 26**) is contained in Working Document WHC-03/27.COM/7A.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. The members of the mission express their gratitude to the Ambassador of Serbia and Montenegro to UNESCO, the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs (Press, Information and Communication) of Serbia and Montenegro, the Chairman of the National Commission for UNESCO, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Montenegro, the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Montenegro, the Minister for Natural Environment and Physical Planning of the Republic of Montenegro and the Mayor of the City of Kotor (Republic of Montenegro), for their availability and assistance, which considerably facilitated the work of the mission.

2. Special thanks go to Mr Ilija Lalosevic, Director of the Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Kotor, and his staff. Their constant support and availability throughout the mission is gratefully acknowledged.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. Following extensive consultations with federal, state, regional and municipal authorities and in the light of field visits to the World Heritage Site of Kotor, carried out in the framework of decision 26 COM 21 (a) 17 taken by the World Heritage Committee at its 26th session (Budapest, June 2002), the mission considers that the site could be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Moreover, it recommends a number of steps to be taken with a view to ensuring an effective protection of the site and the sustainability of its development.

BACKGROUND OF THE MISSION

4. At its 3rd session (Cairo, October 1979) the World Heritage Committee decided to inscribe the Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor on the World Heritage List and, at the request of the State Party, simultaneously on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The inscription took place six months after a terrible earthquake had reduced many of the surrounding villages to rubble and destroyed approximately 70% of Kotor's buildings. A large number of monuments including four Romanesque churches and the town walls, were severely hit by the quake. The city of Kotor and other old towns of the coast were almost entirely evacuated in view of the extensive structural damage suffered by the buildings of these towns.

5. Immediately after the 1979 disaster, UNESCO convened a conference of seismologists and dispatched a team of experts to Montenegro to assess the damage and help the authorities draw up an overall restoration and reconstruction plan. In the following years, and until 1989, the Organization provided a considerable amount of technical and financial assistance to the site, through both its Regular Programme and extra-budgetary sources, including the World Heritage Fund.

6. Owing to the political situation prevailing in the region throughout the 1990's, the World Heritage Committee did not examine the state of conservation of the site since its inscription on the World Heritage List. At its 26th session (Budapest, June 2002), it took the following decision (26 COM 21 (a) 17):

" The World Heritage Committee

1. Notes that preliminary consultations took place between the Centre and the State Party concerning the state of conservation of Kotor;
2. Requests the authorities to invite a UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to evaluate the restoration of the site and its current state of conservation;
3. Requests the mission to provide a recommendation as to whether or not the site could be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger at its 27th session in June/July 2003."

7. Pursuant to that decision, and in response to a request received from the authorities of Serbia and Montenegro, the World Heritage Centre sent a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to the country during the period of 26 March to 3 April 2003. Information on the composition of the mission, its terms of reference and programme are provided in Annex 1 and 4 respectively.

FINDINGS OF THE MISSION

Evaluation of the State of Conservation of the Site

Characteristics of the site

8. The site includes a large part of the deep fiord called Boka Kotorska with the Bays of Risan and Kotor, as well as inner slopes of the surrounding mountains. The region is a unique formation, both from the point of view of geomorphology and of art history. Natural values of the site stem from the unique composition of the landscape relief and from climatic and water conditions, which created an environment for numerous endemic and rare species of flora. The development of settlement resulted in excellent urbanistic and architectural works, combining traditions of the Illyrian, Slavic and Venetian settlements, both in the form of well preserved historical towns of Kotor, Perast, Prčanj and Risan, and of numerous smaller settlements, coastal villas, churches and monasteries. Traditional buildings are characterized by masonry consisting of large or small ashlar limestone, either of local origin or imported from Dalmatian islands. The material alone conveys a specific beauty and harmony even to the simplest vernacular buildings. The natural and cultural elements of Boka Kotorska make up a landscape unit of an exceptionally scenic beauty. The site was included in the World Heritage List under cultural criteria C (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Legal Protection of the Site

9. The 1977 Montenegro Act for the Protection of Cultural Monuments was modified and amended in 1991. It was followed up by the Decree on Registering of Cultural Monuments (1979, amended in 1992) and by the Decree on Regulating Conditions of Archeological Surveys (1980, amended in 1992). Instruments of protection include the 1979 Decision of the Municipality of Kotor, which declared the World Heritage site (which comprises a number of surrounding settlements) as being of special natural, cultural and historical significance, and the 1981 Decision on General Conditions for Construction in the Protected Area. In 1991, a special Law on the Renewal of the Protected Kotor Area was prepared, but its provisions have never been applied in a satisfactory way. The most recent text is the 1997 Ruling on the Organization of Development of Towns and Settlements in the Region of Kotor.

10. Under these laws and decrees, a total of 102 cultural sites, including the architectural ensembles of Kotor and Perast, have been registered within the boundaries of the World Heritage Site and classified in three categories. The number of registered sites does not appear to be adequate, given the impressive density of building heritage in the area.

Institutional Framework of Protection and Conservation

11. In addition to the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Montenegro (located in Cetinje, the former capital), there is a Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, located in Kotor, which is responsible for Boka Kotorska Bay (Kotor, Tivat and Herceg Novi Municipalities). The latter consists of a Department of research and documentation, a Department of architecture, a Studio for conservation and restoration of paintings and artefacts, as well as a Department for the execution of restoration works. Another department handles administrative, legal and financial matters. The Institute is headed by an experienced, highly qualified architect who supervises a well motivated staff of 28 professionals. In spite of limited financial resources, the Director endeavors to provide further professional training to his staff and helps them to obtain short-term fellowships abroad, e.g. ICCROM courses. He also participates actively in international events of relevance to the work of his Institute and has developed good relations with ICOMOS, ICCROM, Europa Nostra and other international organizations and bilateral representations. In its work, the Institute successfully applies internationally acknowledged standards of conservation. The professional and managerial competence of the Institute is not matched, however, with the scope of its effective influence on the process of enacting policy decisions and supervising restoration and building activities throughout the area of the World Heritage Site. The fact that the role of the Institute does not comprise the natural heritage aspect accounts for the reason why its staff does not include any landscape architect. However, there would be merit in widening the scope of the Institute's responsibility accordingly

12. Landscape protection and conservation appear to play a relatively insignificant role in Boka Kotorska, both from the institutional point of view and in the awareness of the general public. The Institute for the Protection of Nature of the Republic of Montenegro (operating under the authority of the Ministry of Natural Environment and Physical Planning), as well as the Coastal Zone Management Agency (supervised by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Transportation) are responsible for a wide range of crucial activities such as the control of solid waste disposal, wastewater discharge to the coast waters, coastal land filling and dumping, sea water pollution through shipping transport, freshwater shortage (in summer), habitat destruction and loss of biodiversity. However, the 1992 Coastal Law appears to pose serious problems for its effective application, while the competence and motivation of the Coastal Zone Management Agency staff are impressive.

General State of Conservation of the Site

13. When assessing the state of conservation of cultural and natural values of the World Heritage Site of Kotor, one should differentiate between historical cores of the towns of Kotor, Perast, and Risan which form historical urban ensembles and feature a high concentration of historical buildings, and the other, mostly modern development along the coastline, which includes historical buildings in small settlements, as well as individual historical villas, properties and churches.

14. The historical town of Kotor proper is in the best condition. The effects of the 1979 earthquake have almost all been removed. The remaining damaged buildings are under reconstruction or their reconstruction is being planned. The entire town is in acceptable conditions today, while further restoration and reconstruction work continues. Just the unique hillside of the town fortifications with the Fortress St. John constitutes a serious problem and prompt conservation work is necessary. The Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Kotor has submitted a well-prepared request concerning preventive conservation of the citadel and fortifications, for financial assistance under the U.S. Ambassador's Fund. The application has been strongly endorsed by the mission during a meeting with a representative of the U.S. Consulate in Podgorica.

15. The town of Kotor has maintained a large part of its beautiful historical stone paving and traditional lighting. Since the inscription of Kotor on the World Heritage List, not a single unfit new building has been erected in its historical area; no tawdry ads, neon signs or chintzy goods for tourists spoil the town interiors.

16. The town of Perast, which comprises much less built heritage than Kotor, is in a less advanced stage of rehabilitation and restoration. The conservation of the palace that houses the local museum can be said to be very successful. The situation of the historical core of the town of Risan is the least encouraging. Progress in restoration is extremely slow both because of extensive damage and of a large number of new buildings that are of average or poor architectural value.

17. The condition of historical buildings situated along the coast outside Kotor, Perast and Risan is not very satisfactory. Only churches and chapels are an exception, as most of them are carefully maintained with the active participation of the Institute. Real estate speculation constitutes a great danger for traditional buildings. Beautiful villas and picturesque vernacular houses that have been damaged not only by the earthquake but also by vandalism or willful extraction of stone materials, continue to deteriorate. It has been inferred that their owners may be waiting for the buildings to collapse totally so that they can replace them by larger new buildings.

18. The worst single intervention in the unique landscape of Boka Kotorska can be seen in the new road presently under construction between Trebinje and Herceg Novi, at about 200m above the sea level, on the western slope of the Bay of Risan. The attempts to dump extracted materials directly into the bay represent a great danger for the landscape, too.

19. The growing pressure of urbanization of the entire Boka coast may well turn out to be a bigger problem than the restoration of buildings damaged by the earthquake. Urbanization is underway partially in an unmethodical way, generating most adverse effects. In many places of the Bays of Risan and Kotor, the degree of urbanization has reached the limit beyond which the values for which the site was listed in the World Heritage List may be seriously endangered.

20. Intensive urbanization often results in architecture of poor quality. It includes brutal concrete buildings from the seventies and eighties, such as the high Jugopetrol building erected before 1979 next to the historical centre of Kotor. The large building of the Fiord Hotel, constructed after 1979, also forms a sad contrast with the historical town core. At present, new concrete buildings or boarding houses and family villas proliferate. Some of them can be described directly as historicizing architectural kitsch. Fortunately, new buildings

in general did not yet achieve – both in quantity and mediocrity – such a level of landscape deterioration as can be seen at other places of the Mediterranean area. The process, however, begins to be imminent in Boka Kotorska, too. Numerous buildings constructed without approval or not in conformity with building permits are quite disconcerting.

21. It is difficult to assess in a detailed way how much the progressing urbanization affects specific natural values of the region. Available data indicate that water in the bay is polluted with various kinds of waste and that urbanization and pollution adversely affect the fauna and flora, thus decreasing biodiversity in the region.

22. The equilibrium between urbanization and grown verdure is extremely precarious in Boka Kotorska, owing to the nature of the soil and to the prevailing climatic conditions of the Adriatic coast. Replacement of the unique garden (with even Renaissance tradition) in the Kotor outskirts by the Fiord Hotel or the already approved, though not yet implemented, construction of a hotel complex at the place of the old forest called Lekovina above the village of Prčanj, which is a very important landscape component, are alarming signals.

Assessment of the Restoration Works Undertaken Following the 1979 Earthquake

23. There are significant differences between conservation and restoration works in which the Institute directly participated and those that were only indirectly influenced by the Institute in the process of project approval and supervision of the implementation. In the former group, which includes e.g. St. Triphon Cathedral as well as Orthodox and Catholic churches and numerous palaces at Kotor and Perast, high conservation standards have been observed. Considerate repair works have attempted to preserve the material substance of historical buildings, to clean the surface of masonry without using fierce sandblasting and to utilize traditional materials and handicraft techniques for additions. In exceptional cases, partial destruction caused by the earthquake prompted rather questionable, archeological and analytical uncovering of older, medieval stages of the building development of monuments; however, not to the detriment of younger values. The restoration of wall paintings undertaken by the team of restorers of the Institute, achieved high international standards.

24. Restoration works in which the Institute did not directly participate are very diverse in quality. Thus, next to careful repairs, adaptations have been noticed that use excessively cement in joints of the characteristic ashlar stone masonry; combined with poor craftsmanship, such techniques deprive houses of their ancient appearance. The current unavailability of certain traditional materials, especially typical baked roofing tiles typical for the Mediterranean region, poses a serious problem. Nevertheless, it may be considered that in general the historic integrity of Kotor and Perast has been fully maintained both as regards the form of squares and streets and the impressive "roof landscape".

Management and Planning of the World Heritage Site

25. Between 1982 and 1987, basic types of spatial plans and master plans had been prepared for the municipality of Kotor (this term comprises a series of settlements and towns of the region of Kotor) as well as the town of Kotor proper. The subsequent Spatial Plan for the Municipality of Kotor was prepared in response to the growing needs of urbanization in 1992-95. Positive impacts of the plans included, for example, targeted closing down of all industries

in the Bay of Kotor, which were moved to the Grbalj Valley after the construction of the tunnel under the Vrmac Hill. The revision and modification of the Master Plan of the Town of Kotor were completed in 1998.

26. These strategic plans provided basic directives for the development of the area and were subsequently completed and updated. During the crisis that started in former Yugoslavia in the early 1990's, it became obvious that the planned activities were no longer in accordance with the possibilities of space nor with the needs of its users. In other words, the plans tended to become more of an obstacle than an agent for development. A new Spatial Plan for the Municipality of Kotor is presently being prepared. It must be pointed out that so far, no special plan has been prepared for the specific purpose of the World Heritage Site and that no site management plan could be identified. Such a plan appears to be indispensable, as well as the designation of one coordinator responsible for monitoring and guiding the development of transport, building and other activities frequently going on in an uncontrolled way. The role played by the Kotor Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage is very meritorious, but it has almost no executive powers. The same can be said of the Republic Institute for Nature Protection in Podgorica. This state of affairs is aggravated by non-observance of spatial plan regulations (or conditions imposed on individual building permits) by undisciplined and often unscrupulous developers. Naturally, it is often difficult to enforce law in the region.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

27. The mission highly appreciated the friendly, open and constructive atmosphere in which meetings and discussions with state and municipal authorities and institutions were held. Upon careful inspection of the entire region of the World Heritage Site and after studying the available written and oral information, the mission arrived at the following conclusions and recommendations:

- 1) In spite of heavy losses caused by the 1979 earthquake and subsequent urbanization with the ensuing results, the Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor has maintained the substance of all values for which it was inscribed on the World Heritage List.
- 2) The inclusion in the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1979 was motivated by serious damages caused by the devastating earthquake. The most valuable monuments and historical buildings, especially those situated in the historic centre of Kotor, have been repaired by means of qualified conservation and partial reconstruction. As the conditions for which the site was included in the List of World Heritage in Danger no longer exist, the site could now be removed from that list.
- 3) It is strongly recommended i) to continue systematically the restoration work undertaken during the past 24 years, also of architecturally less important historical buildings, and ii) to take appropriate measures for the effective protection of the cultural landscape, which is indispensable for the character of the site.

- 4) It is further recommended to prepare, specifically for the World Heritage Site, a spatial plan of special purpose in compliance with the existing legislation. The essentials of this site management plan could be defined by a meeting that would gather all stakeholders. Such a Round Table should benefit from technical and financial assistance from UNESCO, which may also be invited to dispatch one or two specialists to Kotor in order to moderate the event.
- 5) It is recommended that following the Round Table and the adoption of a site management plan, the Government appoint a Site Coordinator and confer upon him/her the necessary authority to enact the implementation of the site management plan.

ANNEXES

1. Terms of reference of the mission

The mission will include a site visit to the World Heritage Site of Kotor. Consultations with relevant national and local authorities, institutions and other stakeholders both in Belgrade and in Kotor are foreseen. In close collaboration with the authorities, the mission will address the following issues:

1. Evaluate the state of conservation of the site;
2. Assess the restoration works undertaken following the earthquake of 1979;
3. Assess whether the conditions for which the site was included on the Danger list still exist and whether or not the site could be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
4. Review the management plan of the property;
5. Evaluate any other issues that may be relevant to the overall conservation of the site;
6. Prepare a report for submission to the World Heritage Centre, the State Party and the Committee.

2. Composition of the mission team:

Dr. Horst Gödicke, UNESCO (head of mission)
Prof. Dr. Josef Stulc, ICOMOS

3. List of persons consulted

Federal Government of Serbia and Montenegro:

H.E. Mr Dragoljub Najman, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate to UNESCO

Mrs Aleksandra Joksimovic, Assistant Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr Jovan Cirilov, Chairman, Serbia and Montenegro National Commission for UNESCO

Mr Ranko Milic, Secretary-General, Serbia and Montenegro National Commission for UNESCO

Government of the Republic of Montenegro:

H.E. Mr Milo Djukanovic, Prime Minister of the Republic of Montenegro

Prof. Dr. Ranko Radovic, Minister for Natural Environment and Physical Planning

Dr. (Ms) Vesna Kilibarda, Minister of Culture

Mr Zoran Soskic, Deputy Minister of Culture

Mr Slobodan Bozovic, Secretary-General, Ministry of Culture

Ms Slavica Perovic, Senior Adviser for Cultural Cooperation, Agency for International Scientific, Educational, Cultural and Technical Cooperation

Ms Aleksandra Ivanovic, Coastal Zone Management Agency, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Transportation

Ms Suzana Popovic, Coastal Zone Management Agency, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Transportation

Kotor, Cetinje, Perast and Podgorica:

Mr Nikola Samardzic, Mayor of the Municipality of Kotor

Mr Ilija Lalosevic, Director, Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Kotor

Ms Zorana Milosevic, Architect-Conservator, Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Kotor

Ms Katarina Nikolic, Architect-Conservator, Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Kotor

Mgr. Ilija Janjic, Bishop of Kotor

H.R.H. Prince Nikolas Petrovich Njegosh, President of the Biennale of Cetinje

Ms Gordana Stevovic, Director, Biennale of Cetinje

Mr Petar Cukovic, Director, National Museum of Montenegro, Cetinje

Mr Sasha Karajovic, Spatial Planner, Centre for Urban Development Planning, Kotor

Ms Jelena Antovic, Director, Historical Archives, Kotor

Josko Katelan, Historical Archives, Kotor

Prof. Dr. Milos Milosevic, Archivist

Prof. Dr. Antonio Salla, Art Historian

Mr Zoran Nikolic, President, “NAPREDAK”, Gornja Lastva

Ms Sanja Medjedovic, USAID Montenegro Advocacy Program, Podgorica

Ms Slavica Rosic, Cultural Affairs Assistant, US Consulate, Podgorica

4. Itinerary and programme of the mission

Wednesday, 26 March 2003

13.20	Arrival Belgrade
14.30	Mr. Jovan Cirilov, President of the National Commission, and Mr. Ranko Milic, Secretary-General of the National Commission
16.00	Ms Aleksandra Joksimovic, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs (Information, Communication and Culture)
20.45	Departure for Podgorica by air
21.30	Mr Zoran Soskic, Deputy Minister of Culture, Republic of Montenegro Mr Slobodan Bozovic, Secretary-General, Ministry of Culture, Republic of Montenegro Ms Slavica Perovic, Senior Adviser, Agency for International Scientific, Educational, Cultural and Technical Cooperation of the Republic of Montenegro

Thursday, 27 March 2003

9.00	Departure for Kotor by car
12.00	Mr Nikola Samardzic, Mayor of Kotor
14.00	Mr Ilija Lalosevic, Director, Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Kotor
16.00	St. Lucas Church
17.00	Church St. Mary of the River and Chapel St. Anne
19.00	Old City of Kotor

Friday, 28 March 2003

9.00	Fortress St. John
13.00	Old City of Kotor
14.00	Ms Jelena Antovic, Director, Historical Archives of Kotor
17.00	Bishop of Kotor, Mgr. Ilija Janjic
18.30	Cathedral St. Tiphon, Kotor
20.00	“Atrium”, former Franciscan Monastery

Saturday, 29 March 2003

- 8.00 Prof. Dr. Ranko Radovic, Minister for Natural Environment and Physical Planning
- 9.00 Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Kotor
- 10.00 Kotor, Prcanj
- 14.00 Dabinovic House, Tripkovic Palace, St. Eustachius Church, Dobrota
- 15.00 St. George Church, Oharovac
- 16.00 Perast
- 17.00 Prof. Dr. Antonio Salla, Island Our Lady of the Rocks
- 19.00 Church St. Mary and local museum of Gornja Lastva

Sunday, 30 March 2003

- 9.00 Archeological site of Kotor Monastery outside the fortified wall
- 10.30 Trinity Fortress
- 12.00 Njegushi
- 13.00 Mr Petar Cukovic, Director, National Museum of Montenegro, Cetinje
- 15.30 H.R.H. Prince Nikolas Petrovich Njegosh, visit of the Royal Palace, Cetinje

Monday, 31 March 2003

- 9.00 Mr Sasah Karajovic, Spatial Planner, Centre for Urban Development Planning
Ms Aleksandra Ivanovic, Coastal Zone Management Agency, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Transportation
Ms Suzana Popovic, Coastal Zone Management Agency, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Transportation
- 12.00 Mr Ilija Lalosevic and senior staff of the Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Kotor
- 17.00 St. Nicholas Church, Perast
- 18.00 Old town of Risan
- 18.30 Towns Strp, Lipci, Morinj, Kostanjica

Tuesday, 1 April 2003

- 9.30 Departure for Podgorica by car
- 11.00 Dr. (Ms) Vesna Kilibarda, Minister of Culture
- 12.30 H.E. Mr Milo Djukanovic, Prime Minister of the Republic of Montenegro
- 15.00 Ms Slavica Rosic, Cultural Affairs Assistant, US Consulate, Podgorica
- 17.00 Ms Sanja Medjedovic, USAID Montenegro Advocacy Program, Podgorica

Wednesday, 2 April 2003

(Horst Gödicke):

- 9.40 Departure for Belgrade by air
- 11.00 Mr Milos Vasiljevic, First Councilor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 13.00 Mrs Aleksandra Joksimovic, Assistant Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs
- 15.00 Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia

(Josef Stulc):

- 9.00 Mr Ilija Lalosevic, Director, Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Kotor

13.00 Visit of the Fortress St. John
17.00 Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Kotor

Thursday, 3 April 2003

(Horst Gödicke):

9.00 Departure for Paris by air (via Düsseldorf)

(Josef Stulc):

8.00 Departure for Podgorica by car

10.00 Departure for Praha by air (via Budapest)