

BELGIUM

I.01. Introduction

Year of adhesion to the Convention: 1996

Organisation(s) or institution(s) responsible for preparation of report

- Foreign Office
- Ministry of Brussels-Capital Region, Housing and Regional Development Authority, Department of Monuments and Sites
- Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Flemish Division of Monuments and Sites
- Ministry of Walloon Region, General Department of Housing, Regional Development and Heritage, Walloon Department of Monuments and Sites
- Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft, Department of Monuments and Sites

I.02. Identification of Cultural and Natural Properties

Status of national inventories

- Inventories, established at regional and local levels, have been used as a basis for selecting World Heritage sites

I.03. The Tentative List

- Original Tentative List was submitted in 1997
- Revisions submitted in 1998, 1999 and 2002
- It is the responsibility of the regional governments (Brussels-Capital; Flemish Region, Walloon Region, German-speaking community), which prepare the individual dossiers

I.04. Nomination of Cultural and Natural Properties for the World Heritage List

Nominations

- Nominations are the responsibility of regional government, prepared in collaboration with consultants/experts and site manager
- Motivations: honour/prestige, conservation
- Difficulties during nomination process: Lack of support from UNESCO

Inscriptions

- 8 cultural sites: *La Grand-Place, Brussels* (1998); *Flemish Béguinages* (1998); *The Four Lifts on the Canal du Centre and their Environs, La Louvière and Le Roeulx (Hainault)* (1998); *Belfries of Flanders and Wallonia*¹ (1999); *Major Town Houses of the Architect Victor Horta (Brussels)* (2000); *Historic Centre of Brugge* (2000); *Neolithic*

Flint Mines at Spiennes (Mons) (2000); *Notre-Dame Cathedral in Tournai*, (2000)²

Benefits of inscription

- Honour/prestige, conservation, increased funding, awareness raising of general public, launching of scientific studies, development of restoration project, increased funding and reinforcement of protection measures

I.05. General Policy and Legislation for the Protection, Conservation and Presentation of the Cultural and Natural Heritage

Specific legislations

- Heritage is the responsibility of the Regions and Community, which have their own legislation to protect heritage (codes, decrees, bylaws...)
- Management plans are not required
- There is no specific planning legislation to protect World Heritage, but many measures have been taken to restore, protect and enhance World Heritage properties: scientific studies, restoration campaigns
- No changes to legislation are envisaged

Other Conventions

Hague Convention (1954), Hague Protocol (1954), UNESCO Convention (1970), Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 (1999), Intangible Heritage Convention (2003), London Convention (1969), Granada Convention (1985), Valetta Convention (1992), Florence Convention (2000), Ramsar Convention (1971), CITES (1973), Bonn Convention (1979), Basel Convention (1989), Bern Convention (1979), Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)

Provisions have been integrated into regional legislation

I.06. Status of Services for Protection, Conservation and Presentation

Organisations, local communities participating in protection and conservation

- Brussels-Capital Region: Ministry of Brussels-Capital Region, Housing and Regional Development Authority (AATL), Department of Monuments and Sites, Royal Commission of Monuments and Sites, Departments of urban planning, housing, urban renovation and planning, Brussels Institute for environment management (IBGE)
- Flemish Region: Housing, Monuments, Sites and Regional Development Authority (AROHM), Division of Monuments and Sites (AML), VIOE

¹ Site renamed Belfries of Belgium and France in 2005.

² Also: *Plantin-Moretus House-Workshops-Museum Complex* (2005).

Institute, Flemish Commission of Monuments and Sites, Flemish Commission for UNESCO

- Walloon Region: Ministry of Walloon Region, General Department of Housing, Regional Development and Heritage, Department of Heritage, Royal Commission of Monuments, Sites and excavations, Walloon heritage Institute, General Department of natural resources and environment, Nature, Forest and Wood Research Centre, Nature conservation Walloon Council
- German-speaking community: German Heritage Authority, Royal Commission of Monuments and Sites.. Heritage conservation is institutionally integrated. The private sector, local communities and NGOs are also involved

I.07. Scientific, Technical Studies and Research

- Many studies and publications dedicated to the preservation, restoration, sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage – and especially Belgian World Heritage sites
- Organisations of international conferences, exhibitions, technical research on built heritage rehabilitation

I.08. Financial Resources

National resources and international financial assistance, fund raising

- Funding of World Heritage sites: local/regional authority budget allowance, private sector. Beyond the regional funding system, the State Party has not established associations for raising funds to protect World Heritage
- Additional contributions to the World Heritage Fund have been made

I.09. Training

Professional and institutional training

- Training needs for the protection of World Heritage have been identified: preservation of traditional know-how in the field of heritage. Heritage training has been provided
- National and regional educational institutions (public and private) are considered important

I.10. International Co-operation

- Cooperation for the protection of World Heritage on the territory of other State Parties: bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements, hosting and/or attending international training courses/seminars, distribution of material/information, financial support and experts
- Measures to avoid damage to World Heritage on the territory of other State Parties: participation in other UN programmes
- Constitution of a network of World Heritage cities with Belfries; Brussels is member of the Organization of World Heritage cities (OWHC); coordination of the Art Nouveau Network

I.11. Information, Awareness Building and Education

Information and awareness raising on local, regional national or international level

- Promotion of World Heritage sites is at international, national, regional and local levels through publications, films, postcards, media campaigns, internet, postage stamps/medals, exhibitions, conferences, press conferences, tourist promotion, raising awareness of site owners, signposts
- Presentation and awareness are adequate
- Education of World Heritage protection: no specific education programmes dedicated to World Heritage, but many initiatives in the different regions have been undertaken in collaboration with institutions, associations and private sector intended for primary and secondary schools

I.12. Conclusions and Recommended Action

Conclusion and proposed actions

- Strengths: Regional Governments have provided strong efforts to improve their heritage protection and enhancement policies; several actions have been undertaken to preserve, restore and promote the World Heritage sites; inscriptions have brought about pride and enthusiasm; Belgium has given priority to experience sharing, especially through regional and international co-operation. Each region has launched projects dedicated to World Heritage and has developed initiatives to raise awareness of public general
- Weaknesses: Due to the complexity of the Belgian political organisation, some regions encounter several difficulties regarding the balance of competences and suffer from a lack of autonomy and resources; lack of specific legislation regarding World Heritage; private site owners at World heritage sites consider protection and enhancement measures as constraints

Proposed actions:

- Reinforcement of general heritage policy
- Development of raising awareness and educational projects, preservation and transfer of traditional know-how and skills
- Updating of the Tentative List in accordance with World Heritage Committee recommendations
- Integration of inscribed sites and their buffer zones in the local plans
- Adoption of a five-year management plan for inscribed sites in Flanders and in Wallonia
- Creation of a national coordination structure for heritage, creation of a numismatic collection at the federal level
- These actions do not require assistance from the World Heritage Fund