

MINISTERSTWO
KULTURY I DZIEDZICTWA NARODOWEGO
PODSEKRETARZ STANU
dr hab. prof. IH PAN Magdalena Gawin

Warsaw, 24 November 2017

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Mrs Mechtild Rössler
Director
UNESCO World Heritage Centre

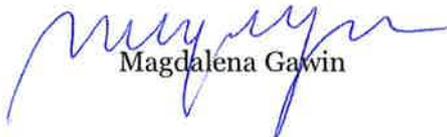
Subject: State of conservation of Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945), World Heritage property.

Dear Madam,

I would like to submit the report on the state of conservation of Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945), the UNESCO World Heritage property. This document is an answer to the recommendations included in decision of World Heritage Centre no 40 COM 7B.55 adopted in 2016.

Hoping for further cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, I would like to assure you that the Government of the Republic of Poland is committed to maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property, and to pass it to the next generations in the best possible condition.

Yours faithfully,



Magdalena Gawin

Attachment:

1. The report on the state of conservation of Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945), the UNESCO World Heritage property

CC:

1. Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Poland to UNESCO
2. Monuments Preservation Department, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
3. Polish National Commission for UNESCO
4. Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum
5. General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways
6. Monuments Inspector of Małopolska Region
7. National Heritage Board of Poland

Report on the State of Conservation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site

Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) (Poland) (C-31)

1. Executive Summary of the report

This report presents the current state of conservation of Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) and its surroundings. It covers the period from the last report submitted to the World Heritage Centre, i.e. from March 2016 to early November 2017. The report addresses issues identified in the decision of the World Heritage Committee no. 40 COM 7B.55, i.e.:

1. Prepared by the National Heritage Board of Poland in 2013 “Conservation strategy for the World Heritage property Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)” was submitted to the manager of the property and the Monuments Inspector of Małopolska Region, and is the basis for creating in the future a management plan / system of the property, including its surroundings.
2. Preparations for the construction of the S1 expressway and the south ring road of Oświęcim have entered the next phase. An Investment Program for the construction of the road was adopted, and adequate financial resources for continuation of further design and research work were secured, including the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA).
3. The main principle of conservation work carried out by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (Museum) within the area of the property is the protection of authenticity, with emphasis on maximum preservation of the original material of the monument and related values, while at the same time protecting and preserving both the aesthetics and the form of the objects characteristic for the period of functioning of the camp.
4. A new way of managing visitor traffic, by requiring pre-registration and booking of visits and limiting access to the property to a thousand people per hour, provides better site protection, consistent with the Museum’s conservation standards.
5. The main manager of the World Heritage property Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) – the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim operates in accordance with the legal acts governing its existence and operation. Its main goal is to commemorate and document the extermination and martyrdom of victims of the Nazi German concentration and extermination camp. As part of this mission, the Museum is a body responsible for the protection and conservation of parts of the area of the former Auschwitz concentration camp, on which it was built, together with all the

buildings, equipment and collections. The third part of the World Heritage Site – the mass grave of inmates is located within the area and in charge of the Commune of town of Oświęcim.

Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945), a World Heritage property, is located in a complex area which includes objects closely related to the history of the place, constituting an important element of the historical landscape. The “Conservation strategy for the World Heritage property”, whose conservation guidelines show the direction of action in this area, is a useful document for the conservation and management of the area.

As far as the ICOMOS advisory mission is concerned, the State Party maintains its invitation for the mission, however, due to organizational reasons, has proposed to postpone the mission to the first half of 2018.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

In July 2016, during the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee in Istanbul, the Committee adopted a decision on Auschwitz Birkenau (No 40 COM 7B.55). The decision addressed some of the main issues concerning the property: the preparation of a detailed “Conservation strategy for the World Heritage property of Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)”, the construction of the expressway and the south ring road of Oświęcim, conservation work carried out by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum within the property, visitor traffic management and tourism strategy, the adoption of the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, management system of the property, building a dialogue between stakeholders related to the property. In its decision, the Committee also indicated the need to invite the ICOMOS advisory mission and set a deadline for preparing a new SOC report until 1 December 2017. In addition, in October 2016, the State Party received an “ICOMOS Technical Review” that covers a similar thematic scope, with particular focus on the analysis of the “Conservation strategy of the World Heritage property” prepared by National Heritage Board of Poland (NID) in 2013.

This report presents the current state of conservation of Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) and its surroundings. It includes the time from the last report submitted to the World Heritage Centre in March 2016 to early November 2017. The responses are arranged according to the recommendations and questions included in the decision:

Re. 4. Conservation strategy

As mentioned in previous reports, “Conservation strategy for the World Heritage property Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)” consists of three volumes including the principles for protection and conservation of the World Heritage property and its surroundings on the basis of valorization of objects and landscape of historic significance. The document was submitted to the manager of the World Heritage property – the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the Monuments Inspector of Małopolska Region. The Monuments Inspector is constantly using the conservation guidelines contained in the document, when deciding on the surroundings of the World Heritage property. Under these works, among others, all places and objects indicated in the “Conservation strategy” have been protected and inscribed to the register of monuments or the communal inventory of monuments. This document is the basis for creating in the future a management plan / system of the property, along with its surroundings.

The “ICOMOS Technical Review” of 2016, referred to above, largely refers to the “Conservation strategy”, analyzes its structure and content, and summarizes conservation guidelines. While positively evaluating the content of the study, it drew attention to the

implementation of the guidelines contained in the Strategy, with an emphasis on the crucial, from the point of view of property protection – the role of cooperation of all stakeholders, in which, in the understanding of the State Party, could help the ICOMOS advisory mission.

It should be noted that two historic buildings located in the protected areas of the World Heritage property – the SS Kitchen and the former grain storehouse (historical building of the State Tobacco Monopoly), which have required maintenance work for years, have gained new managers.

In January 2017 **the SS Kitchen** was taken care of (the agreement with the Oświęcim district office for the indefinite lending of the building) by the Foundation of Memory Sites Near Auschwitz-Birkenau (more about the Foundation in the ad. 10). An inventory of the existing building was made, thanks to the financial support of the Monuments Inspector of Małopolska Region the building was secured against the progressive degradation (roof repair and reinforcement of the ceilings) and funds were requested to carry out the necessary conservation work. Whereas, the previously unused building of **the former grain store** was designated as the seat of the just establishing the Museum of remembrance of the Oświęcim Land's Inhabitants.

Re. 5. The position of the State Party explaining the situation related to the planned construction of the S-1 expressway and the south ring road of Oświęcim

The construction of the S-1 expressway from the “Kosztowy II” junction in Myslowice to the “Suchy Potok” junction in Bielsko-Biała and the south ring road of Oświęcim is a subject that has been discussed for many years, both in the SOC reports and ICOMOS technical reviews for 2014, 2015 and 2016. The last SOC report from 2016 included a comprehensive explanation of the General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways on the state of progress of the investment. The variant E has been selected as the final route variant of the S1 expressway, which is identical to the route of the merged A and B variants, which were approved by the World Heritage Committee as early as 2009 (Decision 33 COM 7B.115), as well as international experts in 2013 (see Appendix 1 – map with variants).

This report presents the current progress with respect to the said investment as at the end of 2017. The General Directorate for National Roads and Highways informed, in the submitted responses (DI.WPI.4110.25.2017.mmb.1 from 11.05.2017 and O.KA.I-1.4110.17.2017.14.TK from 31.10.2017) that on 30.06.2016, the Regional Director of Environmental Protection – Katowice Branch, issued a decision on the environmental conditions for the construction of the S1 expressway from the Kosztowy II junction in Myslowice to the junction of Suchy Potok in Bielsko-Biała according to variant E, together with the ring road of Oświęcim included in this variant (more information about the environmental decision was included in the 2016 SOC report). This environmental decision sets out the environmental conditions that must be fulfilled during the implementation of the investment. With regard to the route of the

Oświęcim ring road in the vicinity of the former Auschwitz Birkenau camp, a World Heritage property, apart from determining the basic technical parameters of the road, such as the length of the ring road, the technical grade of the road and the cross-section, the decision on environmental conditions determines the conditions and guidelines to be introduced at the design stage to minimize the impact of the investment on sites of historical and cultural importance and belonging to the former Auschwitz Birkenau camp. The environmental decision includes a number of design objectives, including: the need to limit the visual impact of the road on the landscape i.e., the need to design the road at the lowest possible altitude in relation to the surrounding area; the need to install and determine the location of acoustic protection to be used to protect the silence zone; the need to cover the acoustic screens with masking vegetation and to visually isolate the road from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Brzezinka by means of a green belt in a width of 15-25 m; it was recommended that the structure of the masking vegetation lane and its species selection be adapted to the conditions of the surrounding landscape by introducing native species in appropriate combinations and sizes; the introduction of archaeological supervision by the person authorized during the construction of the road was also recommended, and in the case of discovering human remains or ashes there would be a need for immediate cessation of earthwork and determination of further action; the need to consult the project with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, the National Heritage Board of Poland, the Polish National Commission for UNESCO, the Monuments Inspector of Małopolska Region and UNESCO experts was also emphasized. On December 21, 2016 General Directorate for Environmental Protection decided on the immediate enforceability of the decision on environmental conditions.

On March 15, 2017, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Construction adopted an Investment Program for the construction of the S1 expressway, thereby securing adequate financial resources for the continuation of further design and research work in the subject matter. As a result, on June 9, 2017 GDDKiA announced a tender for the development of the Program Concept for the construction of the expressway from the Kosztowy II junction in Mysłowice to the Suchy Potok junction in Bielsko-Biała, together with the ring road in Oświęcim. The proceedings have not yet been finalized, they are to be completed in December. The Program Concept should be completed within 11 months of signing the contract. The contract covers the following scope of work:

- a/ preparation of a situational-altitude map for design purposes,
- b/ development of studies in the field of geology, including geological and engineering documentation, hydrogeological documentation, soil tests documentation,
- c/ preparation of a landscape-conservation study in the area of the former Auschwitz Birkenau camp; The study will be developed for the S1 expressway and the Oświęcim ring road for

route of the said roads in the vicinity of the former Auschwitz Birkenau camp in Oświęcim and Brzezinka and the former sub-camps in Pławy, Rajsko and Harmęże. The study will include the analysis of mutual viewing relations between the former camp and sub-camps and the expressway and Oświęcim ring road, together with detailed conclusions and design guidelines to help reduce the impact of the investment on the landscape in this area. This study will also take into account the conservation guidelines contained in the “Conservation strategy for the World Heritage property” prepared by the National Heritage Board of Poland in 2013.

d/ performance of soil tests on the contents of human ashes and remains in places of their potential occurrence; The tests will be performed for the Oświęcim ring road within the area of the former Auschwitz Birkenau camp and former sub-camps in Pławy, Rajsko and Harmęże. A maximum of 100 test boreholes with a depth of 2.0 m are planned, the location of which will be determined by the contractor on the basis of a detailed analysis of the archival materials and in agreement with authorities and bodies competent in this field, including the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

e/ preparation of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), i.e. on the UNESCO World Heritage property of Auschwitz Birkenau, in accordance with the ICOMOS Guidelines of January 2011.

f/ development of the Program Concept; Within the framework of the Program Concept, on the basis of the above mentioned studies and analyzes, the design solutions from the previous stage of the project work will be elaborated, including the geometric solutions of road components and the area boundaries of the investment. In addition, at this stage, individual design solutions, such as road grade, roadway geometry, pavement construction, engineering structures (viaducts, bridges), road lighting, acoustic protection will be developed in few variants and will be analyzed in detail to determine the optimum solution. At this stage, also the bridge on the Soła river, located on the route of the ring road, will be subject to variant analysis, including its construction, to adapt its components to the environment.

Re. 6. Conservation works within the World Heritage property

The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (Museum), the manager of the World Heritage property has been carrying out extensive conservation work in the former camps for many years, as reported in previous reports.

The implementation of the conservation project concerning two brick prisoner barracks in section B1, mentioned in the Committee decision and in the 2016 SOC report, is carried out in accordance with the conservation rules, which form the basis of all standards applied in this type of work at the Museum. The main principle is the protection of authenticity, with

emphasis on maximum preservation of the original material of the monument and related values, while at the same time protecting and preserving both the aesthetics and the form of the structures characteristic for the period of functioning of the camp, which is crucial for preserving their historical, documentary and universal value. This has consequences in the way the work is carried out. Particular emphasis has been put on the pre-work phase, limiting the necessary interventions to a minimum, justified by technical and security reasons, and performing mainly conservative and technical maintenance, with particular emphasis on preventive measures. The activities are documented in accordance with the applicable standards of conservation documentation, extended to the necessary scope by documentation prepared using the available means thanks to the progressive development of technologies, such as laser scanning, photogrammetric or film technique.

In the memorandum developed during the expert meeting in Berlin-Wannsee on 7 April 2017, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site has been featured as a model for other former camp sites, and it was recognized that the rules and standards of the UNESCO World Heritage property for the protection and management of heritage, as well as the principles developed by the International Auschwitz Council, should be applied in other Memorial Sites in Europe. The memorandum contains recommendations concerning, among other things: the principle of preserving the authenticity, integrity of artefacts and archival collections, carrying out conservation work, international cooperation, including the creation of advisory bodies composed of experts in many fields, as well as conducting research on the fate of the victims as well as the perpetrators of the crime.

Re. 7. Visitor traffic management and tourism strategy

In response to an increase in visitor traffic to nearly 2 million people per year, in order to ensure compliance with the conservation standards applied in the Museum, the number of entrances to the property has been reduced to 1,000 people per hour. As already mentioned in the 2016 SOC report, the gradually increasing number of visitors to the property has led to the need for early registration and booking of visits. The result of this change is a more complete turnout control, better in-time planning, and improved visiting conditions – both from the perspective of the visitors and the protection of the property.

The planned construction of the new Service Centre for Visitors of the Auschwitz Memorial in Oświęcim, and the transfer of visitor's service outside of the World Heritage site, will be another important element of the strategy of protecting the property and its Outstanding Universal Value. It should be emphasized that the architectural objectives of the new structures were designed in such a way that their form does not influence the reception of the property and its surroundings. More information about the Centre has been included in previous reports.

Apart from the activities of the Museum, other entities also implement the program of receiving visitors and disseminating knowledge about the difficult history of this area. An example is the Foundation of Memory Sites Near Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was established

to save the objects, items and artefacts associated with the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz Birkenau and its sub-camps. Within the Foundation's activities there has been organized three thematic exhibitions presenting the history and artefacts from Monowitz and Jawischowitz sub-camps.

In turn, in August 2017, the District Council set up a self-governmental cultural institution – the Museum of remembrance of the Oświęcim Land's Inhabitants, whose activity is to present the history of the region in the tragic times of World War II, the history of concentration camps in Poland and their prisoners.

Re. 8. Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)

As mentioned in the point Re. 5., as part of the work on the project of the S1 expressway including the ring road of Oświęcim, the General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways commissioned a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the said investment, according to the January 2011 ICOMOS guidelines and based on the conservation guidelines contained in the "Conservation strategy for the World Heritage property" from 2013. According to the specification of the essential terms of the contract under the tender procedure, the evaluation should be completed within 11 months of signing the contract with the entity selected under the tender. This investment will be partially located within the protected areas of the World Heritage property.

Currently, no other investments which would require a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) have been reported within the area of the World Heritage property.

Re. 9. Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, adopted by the World Heritage Committee by decision no. 40 COM 8E in 2016, was distributed to all stakeholders involved in the protection and management of the World Heritage property and its protection zones, thereby informing the interested parties that this document should be the basis for their action.

Re. 10. Property management system

The main administrator of the World Heritage Site Auschwitz Birkenau, the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp (1940-1945), celebrating this year the 70th anniversary of its existence, is the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim (Museum), which administers the former camps of Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau. The role and purpose of the existence of the Museum, in accordance with its governing and functioning rules, is to commemorate and document the extermination and martyrdom of victims of the Nazi German concentration and extermination camp. As part of this mission, the Museum is the body responsible for the protection and conservation of parts of the area of the former Auschwitz concentration camp, on which it was built, together with all the buildings, equipment and collections. The Museum takes care of the property according to the

legal regulations in force in Poland and in cooperation with the Monuments Inspector of Małopolska Region and the International Auschwitz Council. The multidisciplinary approach to property management is ensured by a diverse team of specialists from a variety of disciplines, including historians, archivists, lawyers, monument conservationists, construction engineers, chemists and microbiologists who know the specifics of the facility in each area of interest and support the benefit of the property. An important role also plays a group of people involved in the interpretation and presentation of the property, which has been conducting its activities for many years through the organization of meetings, conferences and educational workshops, documentary film production and numerous publications. The new publication is an online monthly "Memoria", published in Polish and English, dealing not only with the subjects of Auschwitz but with issues from around the world related to memory of other camps and more generally about the Holocaust and other tragedies of the World War II. Detailed information about PMAB's activities is published annually in the Annual Reports.

The third part of the World Heritage property – the mass grave of inmates, is located within the area and in charge of the Commune of town of Oświęcim.

Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945), the World Heritage property, is located in a complex area where still exist structures closely related to the history of the property, constituting an important element of the historical landscape. The "Conservation strategy for the World Heritage property", whose conservation guidelines show the direction of action in this area, is a useful document for the conservation and management of the area.

Undoubtedly, an important step towards better protection of the surroundings of the World Heritage property is the establishment of the Foundation of Memory Sites Near Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was set up in 2013 in order to save objects, items and artifacts related to the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz Birkenau and its sub-camps, which are currently in the private hands. To fulfill this task and to preserve as much as possible for future generations, the Foundation aims to raise funds for their conservation, protection, storage and popularization. A good example of such initiatives are activities undertaken to secure **the SS Kitchen**, namely an inventory of the existing building, thanks to the financial support of the Monuments Inspector of Małopolska Region, protection against the progressive degradation (roof repair and reinforcement of the ceilings) and fundraising to carry out the necessary conservation work.

Establishment of the aforementioned Museum of remembrance of the Oświęcim Land's Inhabitants is another important activity, which is part of the implementation of the protection of important structures related to the history of the camp, which are located in the protective zones of the World Heritage property, as advocated in the "Conservation strategy". The

building of the former grain store (the historic building of the State Tobacco Monopoly) was designated for the museum's headquarters, for which the purpose was to find suitable use for years. The adapting of the building to the needs of the facility and the commencement of activities is planned for the future – 2018 and is dependent on the acquisition of funding from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

Re. 11. ICOMOS advisory mission

The State Party wishes to comply with the decision of the World Heritage Committee and maintains its invitation for the ICOMOS advisory mission, but has proposed to postpone the advisory mission, due to organizational reasons, to the first half of 2018.

The “ICOMOS Technical Review” from 2016 largely refers to the “Conservation strategy”, prepared by the National Heritage Board of Poland in 2013. It draws particular attention to the implementation of the guidelines contained in the Strategy, highlighting the crucial, from the point of view of property protection, the role of cooperation of all stakeholders. In this very issue, in the understanding of the State Party, the ICOMOS advisory mission should help. Given the specific nature of the property and its particular sensitivity, the ICOMOS advisory mission should address the complexity of building dialogue and understanding among all stakeholders.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property’s Outstanding Universal Value.

Not identified.

4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.

Not identified.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

The State Party hereby consents to the publication of the full version of the report on the World Heritage Centre website.

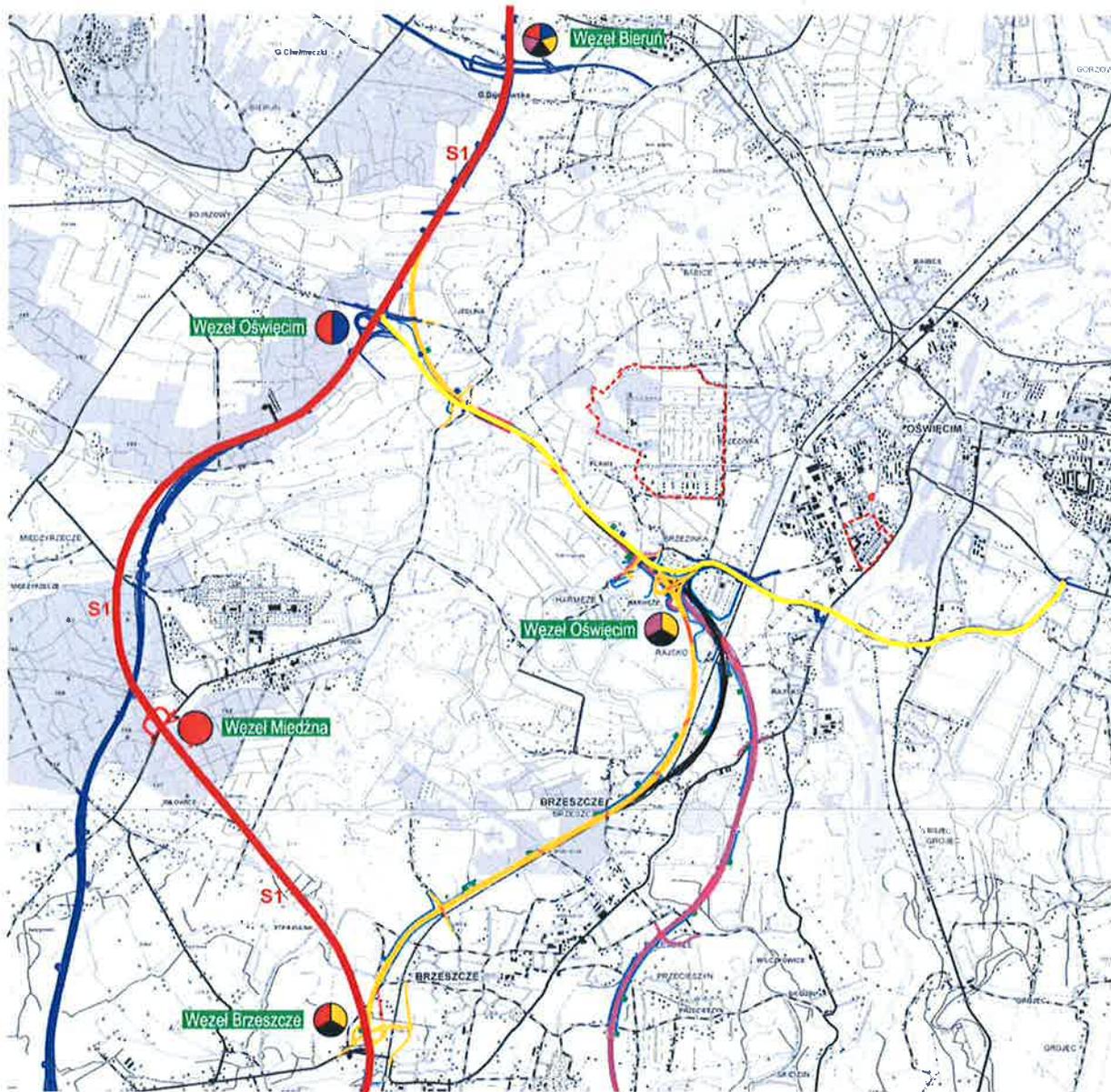
6. Signature of the Authority

**PODSEKRETARZ STANU
GENERALNY KONSERWATOR ZABYTEKÓW**


dr hab. prof. IH PAN Magdalena Gawin

Appendix 1

plan of location of variant E (hybrid variant) of the expressway S-1 along with the south ring road of Oświęcim and the bridge over the river Soła
(source: <http://www.gddkia.gov.pl/pl/a/7890/s1-kosztowy---bielsko-biala>, of 12 January 2016)



- Variant A
- Variant B
- Variant C
- Variant D
- Variant E (hybrid variant)
- Ring road of Oświęcim
- - - Boundaries of World Heritage property