

Dr. Mechtild Rössler
Director
UNESCO World Heritage Centre
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 PARIS 07 SP
FRANCE

Antwort bitte unter Anführung der GZ an die Abteilungsmail

**UNESCO-World Heritage property: Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria) (C1033)
SOC Report 2018**

Madam,

With reference to Decision 41 COM 7B.42, adopted by the World Heritage Committee in its 41st session in July 2017, on behalf of the State Party of Austria I wish to submit a report on the current situation concerning the state of conservation of the Historic Centre of Vienna.

Allow me to stress that further information will be provided in accordance with the timeline of the steps to be taken as laid down in the report.

Please accept, Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Attachment

Vienna, 31st of January 2018
For the Minister for EU, Arts, Culture and Media:
Mag. Ruth Veronika Pröckl
Head of Department II – 4a UNESCO World Heritage
PRÖCKL

Digital Signature

Republic of Austria
State of Conservation Report 2018
Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria) (C 1033)

Executive Summary

As Austria is a federal republic, all provisions related to building legislation, urban development and townscape protection are within sole legal competence of the local authorities; in the respective case the City of Vienna. Regretfully, in the past the exchange of information with the World Heritage Centre and the advisory bodies of UNESCO was not sufficient enough to avert the inscription of the Historic Centre of Vienna in the list of Heritage in Danger.

Since July 2017 there have neither been changes related to the urban development projects, which led to the inscription of the World Heritage property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, nor were (or currently are) there any concrete activities towards their implementation. Therefore an in-depth discussion involving the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS International has been set off at the end of 2017. The objective of the preliminary talks was to discuss the way forward and to agree on the most important steps related to it. The aim is to enable further detailed analyses of the recent developments of the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna” and to develop a specific milestone plan based on the “roadmap” submitted by the World Heritage Centre on 23rd of November 2017, which will define the measures required to delete the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna” from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

As per January 2018, the following steps shall be taken by the State Party:

- In March 2018, an expert workshop will be held on invitation by and under guidance of the Federal Chancellery of Austria, involving most prestigious international experts in the field of urban planning, urban development and in the field of procedures according to international law with special respect to the World Heritage Convention. The results shall be communicated to the World Heritage Centre and to ICOMOS International by mid or the end of April.
- The results shall also serve as basis for the implementation of a comprehensive *Heritage Impact Assessment* (HIA) commissioned by the State Party that shall examine the development of the Historic Centre of Vienna as a whole during the last years. The HIA shall be carried out in early summer 2018.
- The third step shall be the invitation of an official Advisory Mission with the aim to examine the current conservation status of the Historic Centre of Vienna with special regard to the results of the forerun expert-workshop and Heritage Impact Assessment. This step is envisaged for early autumn this year.

The goal of these measures is to ascertain on-site in which way the different existing planning instruments and projects have the potential of endangering the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), to spell out the relevance of the property in its national and international context and to discuss further steps to preserve the OUV of the Historic Centre of Vienna.

Response to:

Decision 41 COM 7B.42

Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/17/41.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decisions **39 COM 7B.94** and **40 COM 7B.49**, adopted at its 39th (Bonn, 2015) and 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) sessions respectively,
3. Also recalling the concerns expressed by the 2012 mission regarding the critical level of urban development reached since inscription and its cumulative impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, the need for new tools to guide the development process towards sustainable development that protects the attributes of the OUV, and the specific recommendations of the 2015 mission to the property,
4. Noting the information provided by the State Party including design changes and a Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed Vienna Ice-Skating Club – Intercontinental Hotel – Vienna Konzerthaus project, the resolution of the City Council of Vienna dated 5th May 2017, the intention to analyse and review existing urban planning instruments, and the advice regarding proposed projects in the the Karlsplatz-area,
5. Welcomes the study on historic roof constructions in the Historic Centre of Vienna by the Federal Monuments Authority in collaboration with the City of Vienna, and requests the State Party to adopt a moratorium on projects that involve any modification of the roofscapes within the property, until the study has been completed;
6. Notes with regret that the changes made to the proposed Vienna Ice-Skating Club – Intercontinental Hotel – Vienna Konzerthaus project do not comply with the previous requests of the Committee, and that the proposed project remains inconsistent with the recommendations of the 2012 and 2015 missions and would adversely affect the OUV of the property if implemented in its current form, and therefore reiterates its requests to the State Party to submit a further revised design to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, before any decisions are made regarding its implementation, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

7. Reiterating its concern that the High-Rise Concept abolishes exclusion zones for high-rise buildings in the Vienna urban areas, without having applied appropriate instruments of control for height, volume and urban density respecting the OUV of the property, and that the Glacis Master Plan permits the construction of buildings of a scale that would have an adverse impact on the urban form and character of the Glacis area, expresses its regret that these instruments have not been repealed or substantially amended, and therefore also reiterates its request to the State Party to facilitate the preparation of revised planning rules and guidelines, which:
 - a) Establish parameters for the urban density as well as specific standards for building height and volume for the property and buffer zone,
 - b) Safeguard the urban morphology that is an essential attribute of the property,
 - c) Encourage sustainable development in the property and its buffer zone in harmony with its OUV,
 - d) Require that all high-rise projects are evaluated through a comprehensive Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), prepared in accordance with the ICOMOS Guidance on HIAs for Cultural World Heritage properties, including reference to 3D visual simulations, so that the effects of the proposed development on the OUV of the property can be properly considered;
 - e) Incorporate the intent of the resolution of the City Council of Vienna, dated 5 May 2017 within the revised planning rules and guidelines;
8. Also requests the State Party to facilitate review of the designs for the proposed developments in the Karlsplatz-area, having particular regard to the setting of the Karlskirche, and to ensure that the proposals are evaluated through a comprehensive HIA, prepared in accordance with the ICOMOS Guidance on HIAs for Cultural World Heritage properties, and that comprehensive documentation, including adequate scale drawings and visualizations of the planned interventions as observed from ground level, are submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, before any decision is made regarding the future of these projects;
9. Urges the State Party not to amend the current land use and development plans and to halt any further approvals for high-rise projects, pending the preparation of the revised planning rules, and submit the proposed designs and related HIAs for any future high-rise projects to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
10. Regrets that the State Party has not complied with the requests expressed by the Committee in Decision **40 COM 7B.49**, in particular related to the lack of change to existing planning controls and the inadequate extent of change proposed for the Vienna Ice-Skating Club – Intercontinental Hotel – Vienna Konzerthaus project;

11. Considers that the current planning controls pose serious and specific threats to the OUV of the property, such that the property is in danger, in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the World Heritage Committee (Krakow, 2017) the Operational Guidelines and **decides to inscribe the Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria) on the List of World Heritage in Danger;**
12. Further requests the State Party, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to develop a set of corrective measures, a timeframe for their implementation, and a Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session in 2018;
13. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2018**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session in 2018.

Responses:

Ad 1 to 4 and 9 to 13:

Since the adoption of Decision 41 COM 7B.42 in July 2017 the situation of the current urban pattern in the area “Intercontinental Hotel – Ice Skating Club – Vienna Concert Hall” remained unchanged. The legal prerequisites for the realisation of the building project were created in June 2017 by the Vienna City Council. According to the information provided by the Viennese authorities, it is estimated that construction work will begin in spring 2020.

The urban development situation in the Karlsplatz site has likewise remained the same. As per January 2018, the legal conditions for the implementation of the planned projects for the Wien Museum and the Winterthur Building have not yet been created; it may be expected that a relevant political decision will be taken in spring 2018.

Up to now there have neither been changes related to the urban development projects, which led to the inscription of the World Heritage property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, nor were there any activities towards their implementation. Therefore an in-depth discussion involving the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS International has been set off at the end of 2017. The objective of the preliminary talks was to discuss the way forward and to agree on the most important steps related to it. The aim is to enable further detailed analyses of the recent developments of the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna” and to develop a specific milestone plan based on the “roadmap” submitted by the World Heritage Centre on 23rd of November 2017, which will define the measures required to delete the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna” from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

As per January 2018, the following steps shall be taken by the State Party:

- In March 2018, an expert workshop will be held on invitation by and under guidance of the Federal Chancellery of Austria, involving most prestigious international experts in the field of

urban planning, urban development and in the field of procedures according to international law with special respect to the World Heritage Convention. The results shall be communicated to the World Heritage Centre and to ICOMOS International by mid or the end of April.

- The results shall also serve as basis for the implementation of a comprehensive *Heritage Impact Assessment* (HIA) commissioned by the State Party that shall examine the development of Historic Centre of Vienna as a whole during the last years. The HIA shall be carried out in early summer 2018.
- The third step shall be the invitation of an official Advisory Mission with the aim to examine the current conservation status of the Historic Centre of Vienna with special regard to the results of the forerun expert-workshop and Heritage Impact Assessment. This step is envisaged for early autumn this year.

The goal of these measures is to ascertain on-site in which way the different existing planning instruments and projects have the potential of endangering the OUV, to spell out the relevance of the property in its national and international context and to discuss further steps to preserve the OUV of the Historic Centre of Vienna.

Ad 5:

The study on historic roof constructions (“Roof-Cadaster”) was completed in late summer 2017 and presented to the public on 15th of September 2017. It is the first area-covering register of historic roof constructions of a historic city centre in Europe and encompasses about 1.400 historic roofs and 180 different construction systems from the 13th to the 19th century. It was carried out in cooperation between the Federal Chancellery and the City of Vienna. The results are considered to be an important basis for future administrative measures and building permissions related to roof conversions.

Ad 6:

Since the submission of the revised project plans the urban pattern in the respective area has remained unchanged. According to the latest information by the Viennese authorities, there shall be an “on-site-clarification of whether the modifications of the Ice-Skating Club/Heumarkt project introduced with respect to the height and area occupied by the project are sufficient to preserve the authenticity of the World Heritage property, or whether this would be lost in case of project implementation, or whether additional measures need to be taken in order to protect the OUV. It is estimated that construction work will begin in spring 2020.”

As mentioned above, the State Party intends to commission a comprehensive Heritage Impact Assessment concerning the latest urban developments (including the Ice Skating/Heumarkt project) within the Historic Centre of Vienna.

Ad 7:

As reported by the Viennese authorities, it shall be clarified “whether the current planning instrument ‘Vienna High-Rise Concept’, which adopts an entirely different methodological approach as compared to its predecessor from 2002 – i.e. a precise description of the development process for

potential high-rises, with special emphasis on protecting the World Heritage property, as opposed to defining heights or high-rise locations –, might indeed potentially run counter to the protection of the World Heritage property “. Furthermore there shall be “clarification of the importance of the resolution of 5 May 2017 of the Vienna City Council as the supreme political decision-making body (in the future, all further high-rise locations in Vienna’s city centre, except for the already existing ones, will be excluded by law) and discussion on how this political-thematic position with regard to the protection of the World Heritage property is perceived by UNESCO and ICOMOS as well as on whether further legal steps should possibly be taken.”

Also these issues hence will be part of the examinations carried out by the Heritage Impact Assessment.

Ad 8:

As already mentioned above the urban development situation in the Karlsplatz site has remained unchanged up until now. According to the City of Vienna “as per January 2018, the legal conditions for the implementation of the planned projects for the Wien Museum and the Winterthur Building have not yet been created; it may be expected that a relevant political decision will be taken in spring 2018.”

The projected extensions of the “Wien Museum” and the so called “Winterthur Building” shall also be analysed by the previously mentioned Heritage Impact Assessment. Special attention shall be given to the vistas from ground or pedestrian level.

Concluding the State Party wants to stress that the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS International will be provided with further information related to the Historic Centre of Vienna by realising the scheduled measures outlined in this report.