



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

In cooperation with



World  
Heritage  
Centre



# MTSKHETA AND TBILISI, GEORGIA 12 TH - 14 TH MAY 2019

## INTERNATIONAL EXPERT MEETING

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERT MEETING ON THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA

### LIVING RELIGIOUS AND SACRED WORLD HERITAGE IN A HISTORIC URBAN CONTEXT

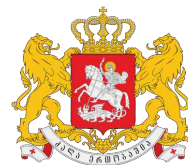


საპარტეზოლო საკანონმდებლო  
სამსახურისთვის, მსოფლიოში  
და რეგიონალურ მნიშვნელობის  
ძეგლების დაცვის მიზნით

საპარტეზოლო კავშირები  
მედიტერანული დასავლეთის  
ეროვნული სააგენტო



NATIONAL AGENCY FOR  
CULTURAL HERITAGE  
PRESERVATION OF GEORGIA



საპარტეზოლო კავშირების  
მედიტერანული კულტურის  
და სურსის საინიციატივო

# **Conclusions and recommendations of the International Expert Meeting on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage Property and its setting**

## **Living Religious and Sacred World Heritage in a Historic Urban Context**

**Mtskheta and Tbilisi, Georgia, 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

The International Expert Meeting on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage Property and its setting/ Living Religious and Sacred World Heritage in a Historic Urban Context, meeting in Mtskheta and Tbilisi, Georgia, 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2019,

Recalling the principles and guidance set out in the World Heritage Convention, its Operational Guidelines and other relevant documents, remembering particularly the 2010 Kyiv Statement on the Role of Religious Communities in the Management of World Heritage Properties, as well as the recommendations of the Expert Meetings held in Moscow (Russian Federation, 2013)<sup>1</sup>, UNESCO (2016)<sup>2</sup>, Nakom Phanon (Thailand, 2017)<sup>3</sup>, Yerevan (Armenia, 2018)<sup>4</sup> and Kyiv (Ukraine, 2018)<sup>5</sup> organized within the framework of the UNESCO Initiative on World Heritage of Religious Interest, and also of the cross-thematic meeting on Religious Heritage and Astronomy at Gran Canaria (Spain, 2018)<sup>6</sup>,

Recalling also the various missions, reports and decisions of the World Heritage Committee concerning the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage Property and its setting,<sup>7</sup>

Thanking the Government of Georgia, the National Agency for the Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia (NACHPG) and the Patriarchate of Georgia (the Patriarchate) for their generous hospitality in hosting and the excellent organization of the meeting;

We, the representatives of the joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS, ICCROM, IUCN Steering Group on Heritage of Religious Interest, the ICOMOS

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution of the International Seminar for Representatives of Religious Organizations involved in the Management and Use of World Heritage Properties of Religious Interest (Moscow, 15-16 May, 2013) <https://whc.unesco.org/document/124117>

<sup>2</sup> Conclusions and Recommendations Thematic Expert Consultation meeting on sustainable management of World Heritage properties of religious interest with focus on South-Eastern and Mediterranean Europe (UNESCO Headquarters, 16-18 February 2016) <https://whc.unesco.org/document/140647>

<sup>3</sup> International consultative workshop on the conservation and management of the World Heritage of religious interest in Asia-Pacific (2017); Nakhon Phanom Statement on World Heritage of Religious Interest in Asia-Pacific Region <https://whc.unesco.org/document/158441>

<sup>4</sup> Regional Thematic Expert Consultation meeting on sustainable management of World Heritage properties of Religious Interest focused on Eastern Europe (2018); Yerevan Recommendation <https://whc.unesco.org/document/167785>

<sup>5</sup> International seminar and network meeting of site managers 'Living Religious World Heritage: Participatory Management and Sustainable Use' (2018) <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1465/>

<sup>6</sup> International Expert Meeting on Astronomical Heritage and Sacred Places (2018): Gran Canaria Recommendation <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1830> / <https://whc.unesco.org/document/168092>

<sup>7</sup> see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/708/documents/> for these documents

Scientific Committee on Places of Religion and Ritual (PRERICO), the representatives of the Georgian national and municipal authorities and the Patriarchate, and the experts from Georgia, Poland, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom;

**Agreeing that:**

The Mtskheta Historical Monuments World Heritage property and its buffer zone and broader setting<sup>8</sup> form a cultural landscape which includes all the elements of New Jerusalem together forming a heritage of the highest significance, needing to be conserved and used sustainably;

Primary responsibility for the management of the property and its buffer zone and broader setting belongs to the Patriarchate, the municipality and NACHPG;

The national authorities should provide appropriate support to the Patriarchate and the municipality to fulfil their management roles;

Conservation and sustainable use, including for worship, are the most important aspects of the management of the property;

The landscape, urban and rural, of the property and its buffer zone and broader setting together need to be protected with particular attention being paid to the various tangible and intangible elements of New Jerusalem, and the protection of its natural values including the riparian system;

All aspects of the management system, including the needs of the church, the local community, pilgrims and tourists, should be integrated into the Management Documentation for Spatial Territorial Development of Mtskheta currently under development;

The development of an agreed approach to the conservation and sustainable use of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage property and its buffer zone and broader setting could be used as a model case study in the management of living religious and sacred World Heritage properties elsewhere;

**Noting that:**

The Historical Monuments of Mtskheta are inscribed on the World Heritage List according to the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and granted enhanced protection according to the Second Protocol of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict;

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<sup>8</sup> This terminology follows guidance on management in the World Heritage Operational Guidelines: *Effective management involves a cycle of short, medium and long-term actions to protect, conserve and present the nominated property. An integrated approach to planning and management is essential to guide the evolution of properties over time and to ensure maintenance of all aspects of their Outstanding Universal Value. This approach goes beyond the property to include any buffer zone(s), as well as the broader setting. The broader setting may relate to the property's topography, natural and built environment, and other elements such as infrastructure, land use patterns, spatial organization, and visual relationships. It may also include related social and cultural practices, economic processes and other intangible dimensions of heritage such as perceptions and associations. Management of the broader setting is related to its role in supporting the Outstanding Universal Value.* (Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, para 112 (2017))

Understanding of the values of the property and its buffer zone and broader setting should be based on a thorough knowledge and analysis of their tangible and intangible attributes, including all elements of New Jerusalem and of earlier periods of the area's history and prehistory;

Agreement and consensus among the key stakeholders are essential to any lasting solution to the conservation and sustainable use of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage property and its buffer zone and broader setting;

Stakeholders have differing levels of involvement and authority in the management of the property and its buffer zone and broader setting; it may be more effective for them to work in smaller groups on specific issues within an overall integrated approach through the **Special Steering Inter-institutional Committee** and its **Professional Consultative Council** to supervise the "Elaboration of Management Documentation for Spatial-Territorial development of Mtskheta";

The management system for the property must develop an integrative approach to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and the great significance of its buffer zone and broader setting, and also to provide for sustainable development of the town of Mtskheta and its environs for the benefit of its citizens;

With welcome support from the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, great efforts have been made in recent years to achieve an effective management approach to the conservation and sustainable use of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage property and its buffer zone and broader setting in consultation with all stakeholders, and particularly the Georgian authorities/ NACHPG, the Patriarchate of Georgia and the Municipality of Mtskheta, but these efforts should be continued in order to complete, adopt and implement the Management Documentation for Spatial Territorial Development of Mtskheta as agreed and accepted by the stakeholders;

Further legislation/ regulation at the local level needs to be developed in consensus with key stakeholders; protected areas legislation may be appropriate for protection of the buffer zone.

Efforts should be continued to achieve agreement on appropriate legal regulations to protect and manage the property and its buffer zone;

The Historic Urban Landscape approach<sup>9</sup>, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG targets 11.4, 11.6 and 11.7<sup>10</sup> and the Habitat III New Urban Agenda<sup>11</sup> offer guidance for sustainable management in the urban and rural context of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta;

## **Recommend that**

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<sup>9</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1026/>

<sup>10</sup> **11.4** *Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage*

**11.6** *By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management*

**11.7** *By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities* (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11>)

<sup>11</sup> <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf> and see <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/Habitat%20III%20Policy%20Paper%202.pdf> for policy paper *Socio Cultural Urban Framework*

## **A Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage Property and its setting and the New Jerusalem concept**

1. The landscape, urban and rural, of the property and its buffer zone and broader setting should be protected with particular attention being paid to the various tangible and intangible elements of New Jerusalem, including the preparation of an inventory of these together with other archaeological sites;
2. The natural values of the property, its buffer zone and broader setting including the riparian system should be protected;
3. Understanding of the values of the property and its buffer zone and broader setting should be based on a thorough knowledge and analysis of their tangible and intangible attributes, including all elements related to the concept of New Jerusalem and of earlier periods of the area's history and prehistory;
4. The management system for the property should develop through participatory processes an integrated approach to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and the great significance of its buffer zone and broader setting, and also to provide for sustainable development of the town of Mtskheta and its environs for the benefit of its citizens;
5. The approach to participatory management should include the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG targets 11.4, 11.6 and 11.7<sup>12</sup> and the Habitat III New Urban Agenda, as well as other existing guidance from the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre;
6. Stakeholders should include rights-holders such as landowners as well as major national and local interests, and civil society;
7. Agreement and mutual understanding should be reached through dialogue between key stakeholders on appropriate legal regulations to protect and manage the property and its buffer zone and broader setting;
8. The use of small task-oriented working groups on specific management issues should be explored within the framework of the established **Special Steering Inter-institutional Committee** to supervise the "Elaboration of Management Documentation for Spatial-Territorial development of Mtskheta" and its **Professional Consultative Council**;
9. The national authorities should provide appropriate support to the Patriarchate and the municipality to fulfil their management roles through the Historic Urban Landscape approach;
10. Efforts should be continued to complete, adopt and implement the Management Documentation for Spatial-Territorial Development of Mtskheta agreed and accepted by the stakeholders, as well as to agree on relevant heritage protection zones;
11. All aspects of the management system, including the needs of the church, the local community, pilgrims and tourists, should be integrated into the Management Documentation for Spatial Territorial Development of Mtskheta currently under development;

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<sup>12</sup> See footnote 9-11 for links to these texts

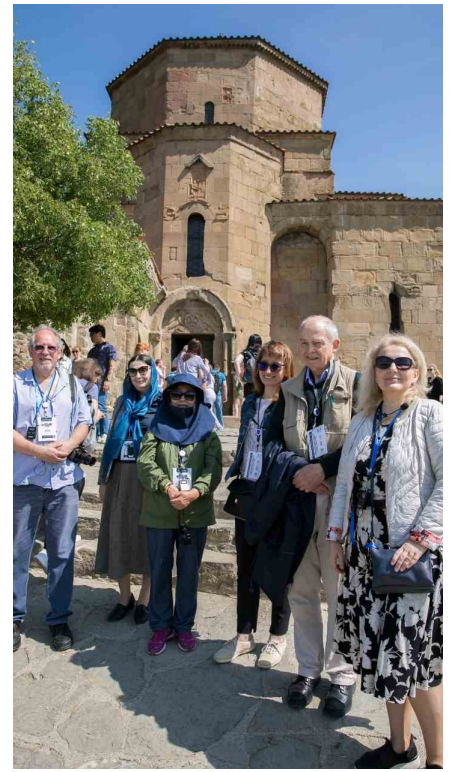
12. The authorities should investigate further means of protecting the cultural landscape formed by the property, its buffer zone and broader setting, including the control of inappropriate uses and developments and implementing remedial measures for existing damage;
13. Implementation of the developing management system should be monitored at regular intervals;
14. State of conservation of, and safe access to monuments in the World Heritage property, its buffer zone and broader setting, should be assessed to identify and carry out urgent work;
15. The carrying capacity of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone and broader setting should be assessed and agreed; tourism infrastructure, using sustainable design should be provided in accordance with the carrying capacity so as to preserve the tangible and intangible values of the area; visitor infrastructure should provide appropriate access and presentation for people with special needs;
16. Interpretation and presentation of the site should be integrated to encourage access across the World Heritage property, its buffer zone and broader setting, using sustainable design such as ecologically sensitive means, including trained interpreters and new technologies;
17. Capacity development and awareness raising about the World Heritage property, its buffer zone and broader setting should be provided for all stakeholders on a regular basis in line with the 2011 ICCROM Capacity Building Strategy<sup>13</sup>.

## **B Initiative on World Heritage of religious Interest**


18. The development of an agreed approach to the conservation and sustainable use of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage property and its buffer zone and broader setting should be used as a model case study in the management of living religious and sacred World Heritage properties;
19. Acknowledging the case studies, including on New Jerusalem, presented during the meeting, States Parties are invited to contribute actively to the UNESCO initiative by identifying further case studies on safeguarding of sacred sites illustrating interlinkage between the Outstanding Universal Value and associative sacred values, trans-thematic interaction between the World Heritage Programmes and Initiatives, and inter-Conventions synergy, as well as UN inter-Agency collaboration.
20. States Parties are invited to use the format of such Expert Consultation Meetings focusing on thematic case studies as an appropriate format for developing safeguarding measures for World Heritage of religious interest.
21. Noting the offer by Poland to enhance bilateral collaboration with Georgia, encourages States Parties to develop the networking of World Heritage properties of religious interest.

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<sup>13</sup> See <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2011/whc11-35com-9Be.pdf>



General Rapporteur: Christopher Young  
 Scientific Committee: Rii Hae Un (PRERICO (ICOMOS ISC on Places of Religion and Ritual)/ Dongguk University, Republic of Korea);  
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 Josep-Maria Mallarach (IUCN); Jon Seligman (ICCROM Representative)  
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 National Kyiv-Pechersk Historical and Cultural Preserve Evgeneva Liudmila Vladimirovna - World Heritage Property "Cultural and Historic Ensemble of the Solovetsky Islands"  
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 Panoramic view of Mtskheta. From D. Ermakov's photo archive



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