

**State of Conservation Report<sup>1</sup>**  
**Budapest, including the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter**  
**and Andrásy Avenue**  
World Heritage Site, Hungary  
Inscribed on the World Heritage List under number C 400 in 1987  
Extension: 400bis, in 2002

## **1. Executive Summary of the Report**

As a centre for receiving and disseminating cultural influences, Budapest is an outstanding example of urban culture and history in Central Europe, characterised by periods of devastation and revitalisation. Even though through the unification of the three former cities of Pest, Buda and Óbuda, over the past fifty years Budapest has become a global city, it has still managed to retain the original, separate structural characteristics and identity of the former cities of Pest and Buda. The historizing and art nouveau style city structure of Pest is one of the largest in the world.

Throughout its history Budapest always stood as the symbol of development, by catching up to the Western European capitals, keeping up with their continuous progress. One good example for this pioneer role among global cities is the Andrásy Avenue and the Millennium Underground Railway, which was considered unique and a ground breaking innovation within Continental Europe at the time it was constructed. In its attributes, the property preserves the defining characteristics of the architectural and urban development heritage created by consecutive layers of historical periods.

Budapest as a capital and a global city in its own right has to live up to several expectations of urban development which cause major challenges for the preservation of the World Heritage Site. Among other things, these challenges are the significant interest in tourism, the real rapid estate development, the high-rise buildings, the conservation of green surfaces, the follow up of international trends, and in addition to preservation, the need for expressing and reinforcing national identity.

Recently many concerns were expressed and objections were raised regarding the effectiveness of the conservation of the Budapest World Heritage Site because of its dynamic urban development results. An ICOMOS Advisory Mission took place on the 4-8<sup>th</sup> of February 2018 and a World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission visited the property on the 28-30<sup>th</sup> of April 2019. Both expressed concerns in their reports regarding the preservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, highlighting the questions of management, authenticity and integrity. Observations and suggestions were made regarding the developments of Buda Castle, the Városliget, and the construction of the MOL high-rise building outside the buffer zone. It has been also noted, that the organisational structure responsible for the conservation of the property as well as the legal background providing protection is overcomplicated and lacking in certain aspects. The professional theoretical background of the interventions affecting the World Heritage Site also needs to be

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Annex 13 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention

firmed and synchronized with the international Charters and the internationally approved professional definitions.

Hungary is ready and committed to fulfil its State Party duties arising from the World Heritage Convention. We believe that the World Heritage sites have to be preserved, used, presented, developed or restored in a sustainable manner, safeguarding their national and outstanding universal values, as well as contributing to the public policy. State Party makes every effort possible in order to properly ensure - as set out in the Convention - that developments shall not cause the decrease of the Outstanding Universal Value and its deterioration, and shall not endanger the authenticity and integrity of the property. Furthermore State Party ensures the access to the World Heritage values, the accessibility and entrance for visitors to the World Heritage site.

With the maximum consideration of the observations and suggestions of the Committee and the Reactive Monitoring Mission, in 2019 a great number of specific measures were taken by the State Party that clearly demonstrates its commitment to the Convention. We believe we made a lot of progress.

As detailed in our State of Conservation Report, during last year we clarified the fields of responsibilities, made the necessary organisational changes, created such innovative legislation that can be a positive example even on the international level, prevented the realisation of all new high-rise buildings, prepared (and we are continuously preparing) the heritage impact assessments of the various development project proposals, and revitalised the dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. We have also begun the development of an online, digital platform which can provide up-to-date information and transparent insight to the World Heritage Sites of Hungary.

We do hope that the content of the State of Conservation Report showing the significant progress we've made will ease the Committee's concerns about the issues raised in past years and will provide reassurance that the World Heritage Site in Budapest is being preserved efficiently and is in no shape or form in danger of losing its authenticity and integrity.

The State Party is committed to further strengthen its cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and remains open for dialogue with the World Heritage Committee and its Advisory Bodies.