Annex 13 of the Operational Guidelines

FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS BY THE STATES PARTIES

(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines)

WORLD HERITAGE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE OHRID REGION (Republic of North Macedonia) (C/N 99ter)


Name of World Heritage property: Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (Republic of North Macedonia) (C/N 99ter)
Date of inscription: 1979
Extension: 1980, 2019
Minor boundary modification inscribed year: 2009
Criteria: (i) (iii) (iv) (vii)

Executive Summary of the Report
The Republic of North Macedonia remains firmly committed to maintain the status of World Heritage for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region. This State of Conservation Report for Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (Republic of North Macedonia) expresses the efforts of the State Party, which, during this reporting period, has significantly intensified its activities towards implementation of the recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring Mission (2017), as well as deepening the bilateral cooperation with the Republic of Albania for joint management of the property.

During the reporting period, the Republic of North Macedonia adopted the Management Plan for Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (2020-2029). Concurrent with the preparation of the Plan, the State Party also conducted a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. Furthermore, the State Party also compiled an inventory of illegally built structures on the territory of the property, thus fulfilling the prerequisites for conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA).

The Republic of North Macedonia began field works for the sanitation and rehabilitation of the Lake Ohrid wastewater management system, for which over 4 million euros were allocated from the state budget. The project to divert the Sateska River is ongoing. Field work to partially divert the course of Sateska River into the Crn Drim River basin is planned to be completed by the end of 2023.

Following the adoption of the World Heritage Committee Decision 43 COM 7B.9 (Baku, Azerbaijan, 2019) approving the significant boundary modification of the property on the territory of the Republic of Albania, both countries deepened their bilateral cooperation and established of a system for joint management of Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region. The Joint Management Committee was established and held its first working meeting in January 2020.
Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

Decision: 43 COM 7B.36

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/19/43.COM/7B,

2. Recalling Decisions 40 COM 7B.68 and 41 COM 7B.34, adopted at its 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) and 41st (Krakow, 2017) sessions respectively,

3. Welcomes the halting of the procedure for modification of the Management Plan of Galicica National Park, specifically its zoning, which de facto has stopped the construction projects of the sub-sections (a) and (e) of the A3 road and the Galicica ski resort within the property, however, considering that this step is not sufficient to significantly reduce the vulnerability of the property;

4. Also recalling its decisions supporting the conclusions of the 2017 Reactive Monitoring Mission that the overall state of conservation of the property was vulnerable to various threats that, if the priority recommendations were not implemented within a two-year timeframe, the property could meet the criteria for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger;

5. Notes that partial progress has been made in implementing urgent Committee requests and recommendations, including the delayed implementation of key milestones with no revised timeframe being proposed, especially the moratorium on any transformation within the property, the inventory of illegal buildings and the demolition of those negatively impacting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, the approval of all relevant planning instruments, including the Management Plan, as well as other key recommendations of the 2017 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission;

6. Also notes that the State Party is not regularly informing the World Heritage Centre of projects and planning activities being developed within the boundaries of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

In September, 2019, at the request of Ohrid Municipality and in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, the State Party submitted the project documentation regarding the “Project for Reconstruction of the Ohrid Quay” to the World Heritage Centre and the advisory bodies for the purpose of obtaining expert instructions and guidelines. In addition, the advisory bodies required additional information, while the open issues regarding the project should be addressed during the Reactive Monitoring Mission which will be held at the end of January 2020.
The State Party, at the request of the Public Enterprise for State Roads (PESR), requested expert consultations from the World Heritage Centre and the advisory bodies for the purpose of addressing any open questions concerning the road infrastructure activities in the Ohrid Region, and the recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring Mission (2017).

The Advisory Mission was realized in the period December 10-11, 2019 in Skopje. ICOMOS and IUCN representatives held work meetings with engineers from PESR and PESR consultants/designers. The Advisory Mission focused on exchange of information and constructive considerations about the recommendations given for sections A of Corridor 8, Trebenishtë - Struga, Struga - border with the Republic of Albania. The current additional design for the needs of the project for construction of the highway A2, Kichevo - Ohrid section was also discussed, especially regarding the sections within the boundaries of the protected area of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region.

The potential project for the road Struga - Republic of Albania was also discussed as part of the Advisory Mission. Upon receiving the recommendations which should be contained in the Report of the Advisory Mission, the State Party will proceed with the implementation of the projects according to the findings and recommendations.

7. Notes with concern that the State Party has not yet addressed the recommendations on the Railway corridor VIII, despite the Committee’s request to consider alternative routes outside the property and outside the extension proposed by the State Party of Albania; and also with highway stretch A2 Trebeništa - Struga even though an adequate Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has not been undertaken of the overall impact of this road on the OUV of the property, and reiterates its request to the State Party to urgently identify optimal solutions for these projects, avoiding impact on the OUV of the property and the extension proposed by the State Party of Albania.

The Republic of North Macedonia remains dedicated to finding a mutually acceptable solution for a Railway Corridor VIII route which will ensure the historical transport connection of the region -- contributing to the significant economic growth in the region -- and at the same time not endanger the authenticity and integrity of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region.

Technical alternatives of the railway route, accompanied with cost-benefit analyses, were reviewed throughout the preparation of the Feasibility Study which preceded the design phase. The route elaborated at the technical design level derives from the specific configuration of the field, the project parameters for this type of infrastructure, optimization of the realization costs, as well as the conditions related to the connection with the Republic of Albania, i.e. the existing railway infrastructure from the Albanian side. This alternative will be re-examined due to the possible impact on the property, the potential disruption of bio corridors, fragmentation of dwellings and cumulative impacts with the realization of highway A2.
Considering the fact that the planned railway route is subject of international agreement between the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania, the extension of the property in July 2019 will help intensify dialogue between both State Parties and UNESCO towards finding an acceptable solution for this route.

On December 10, 2019, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia obliged the General Secretariat to conduct a tendering procedure to analyze the alternative railway route proposed by UNESCO advisory bodies during the Reactive Monitoring Mission (2017). In addition, a state workgroup had been established consisting of all relevant institutions which, among other things, will cooperate with UNESCO and counterparts in the Republic of Albania for finding an acceptable solution for this infrastructure venture.

Annex I: Route alternatives considered in the basic project

Concerning the issues related to the A2 highway, see contributions under item 6.

8. Notes with satisfaction that the State Party’s action on the long-term projects including the waste water management system and redirecting of River Sateska, and furthermore welcomes the Government’s adoption of Law on Management of the Natural and Cultural Heritage in the Ohrid Region, as well as the Government Decision taken in June 2019 tasking all relevant domestic institutions to implement the recommendations of the World Heritage Centre;

Detailed information concerning the waste water management system and the Sateska River project are provided further in the report. Following the Government’s formal adoption of the Law on Management of the Natural and Cultural Heritage in the Ohrid Region, the proposed law did not pass the first reading stage in the relevant parliamentary committee in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. Consequently, the Government withdrew the legislation for further consultations and work. In the meantime, the State Party proceeded, unimpeded, with fulfilling the Reactive Monitoring Mission recommendations within the existing legal framework, with particular focus on adopting the Management Plan, completing the Inventory, and forming a Joint Management Committee with the Republic of Albania.

9. Strongly reiterates its requests to the State Party to:

a. Establish a moratorium on any urban and coastal transformations within the property until all relevant planning documents have been finalized and adopted, effective protective regulations have been approved and effective control mechanisms established,

In July 2019, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted a Decision recommending to the municipalities of Ohrid, Struga and Debarca to temporarily suspend the issuance of construction permits and legalization of illegally built

Annex II: Translations of decisions of the three municipalities.

b. **Inventory illegal constructions, assessing their impacts on the OUV of the property through appropriate HIA and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes and proceed to demolishing all those which represent a threat to the property.**

The Ministry of Transport and Communications, in cooperation with the municipalities within the World Heritage property and the National Park Galicica, compiled an inventory of illegally built facilities in the region, as per instructions by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Namely, the State Party prepared a unified table containing data on illegally built facilities in accordance with the Law on Acting Upon Illegally Built Facilities (Official Gazette of RM No. 23/2011, 54/2011, 155/2012, 53/2013, 72/2013, 44/2014, 115/2014, 124/15, 129/15, 217/2015, 31/2016 and 190/2017). The inventory, apart from the basic data, also contains information on the purpose of the illegally built facility, whether it is located in the protected coastal belt of 50 meters, as well as the status of the subjects and the location. At the moment of submission of this report, the inventory contains data provided by the municipalities of Ohrid, Struga, Debrica and the National Park Galicica.

With the completion of the Inventory and the adoption of the Management Plan, the prerequisites for conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the illegally built facilities have been met. The assessments will provide guidelines for future actions to be taken with regards to the facilities that will be conducted for the territory of the property as a whole.

Parallel to the inventory compilation process, the Municipality of Ohrid began the process for removing facilities, which according to national regulations cannot be legalized i.e. present illegal usurpation of state land. According to the municipality’s action plan, on 13.08.2019, Ohrid Concluded agreement no. 09-12088/1 in the amount of MKD 1,499,999 to hire construction mechanization for implementation of administrative and management acts for demolition of illegal constructions. Additional MKD 2,000,000 are planned with the Municipality budget rebalance (published in the Official Newsletter of Ohrid Municipality, No 13, on 28.10.2019). The activities for removing illegally built facilities commenced with platforms
(beaches, restaurants/cafes) along the shore. The removal works are ongoing in accordance with the municipality's action plan.

Annex II: Photographs of the removal activities in Ohrid.

c. Ensure strict enforcement of laws and regulations to prevent any further illegal construction.

In the context of the aforementioned, the State Party emphasizes that it approaches the issue with illegal constructions on the territory in the Ohrid Region with great responsibility and care. In that regard, the State Party informs that the latest draft Law on Establishing the Legal Status of Illegally Built Facilities (2019), which covers the country as a whole, and is pending in parliamentary procedure, exempts the territory of the Ohrid Region from legalization. Pursuant to the draft Law, the legal status of all illegal constructions within the World Heritage property, i.e., facilities which are deemed to endanger the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) will not be legalized. As per the recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring Mission, and the existing legislative framework, following an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) it will be determined whether an illegally built construction would be legalized or removed.

d. Finalize the Management Plan for the property and align all relevant planning instruments with the overall aim of protecting and sustaining the OUV of the property and submit the draft to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, prior to its finalization and adoption.


The restart of the drafting process of the Management Plan for Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region began at the end of 2018/beginning of 2019. A Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment was conducted parallel to the drafting of the Plan, in accordance with World Heritage Committee Decision (40 COM 7B.68). In order to ensure synergy among the relevant institutions, as part of the drafting process, working meetings were held with representatives of the municipalities of Ohrid, Struga and Debarca, as well as the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Museum–Ohrid, Hydrobiological Institute–Ohrid, National Park Galicica, and the Museum “Dr. Nikola Nezlobinski” from Struga; institutions which actively participated in the preparation of the Plan.

The process of drafting the Management Plan also included public debates in Skopje, Ohrid and Struga, which were attended by a large number of stakeholders including
citizens, representatives of institutions, civil society, as well as representatives of institutions from the Republic of Albania. Numerous comments and contributions were submitted during the public consultations period, which lasted for more than 60 days. The contributions, especially those by civil society, were generally assessed as a constructive contribution for improvement, and were subsequently incorporated in the Draft Plan. The contributions focused in large part on the need to strengthen protective measures, not only by addressing immediate threats on the Outstanding Universal Value, but also by including provisions for the revitalization of the values that have been damaged or lost in the meantime. The interest by the public once again clearly showed that the World Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region deserves more serious treatment by the institutions and that its conservation should be included in the national and local programs and activities as top priority.

In October 2019, the Draft Management Plan for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region was submitted to the World Heritage Center of UNESCO and Advisory bodies. The input and recommendations by ICOMOS were taken in consideration and appropriately incorporated in the Plan.

Furthermore, it can be emphasized that the UpStream process, conducted in the period 2014-2018, (organized by UNESCO and ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM) strengthened the need for an integrated cross-border cooperation and provided an opportunity for exchange of experiences and the possibility to acquire knowledge about the values, threats and management measures in the cross-border context, which will contribute to further strengthening of the integrity of the protected property. These activities had an impact on the scope and quality of the Management Plans of both countries.

The Management Plan, as adopted, focuses on the management of the Ohrid Region, i.e. establishing a balance between the conservation of its Outstanding Universal Value, utilization of natural resources, social development and economic growth within the World Heritage property. The risks endangering the heritage are clearly outlined, with corresponding mitigation measures and proposed activities. An important feature of the Plan is the new zoning within urban centers and other parts of the region with corresponding protective measures, aimed at more balanced management of urban expansion. In that regard, it was assessed that the successful management of the world heritage must be all-encompassing and ensure sustainable development on the territory of the property.

Considering that the management of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region is highly complex due to a number of features (the property spreads over a relatively large territory and encompasses the municipalities of Ohrid, Struga and Debrica; it is a mixed world heritage site - natural and cultural; the management frame consists of numerous laws, strategic documents; and the management is done by a large number of institutions of the central authority and local self-government), the Management Plan clearly defines the management mechanisms of the property, i.e. the national and international mechanism.
The national mechanism includes all state institutions responsible for managing the natural and cultural heritage (clearly mapped out in the Plan), as well as the entities responsible for their coordination. The two institutions responsible for coordination and monitoring the management of the property are the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Commission for Management of Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region. With the adoption of the Plan, the Commission will be able to more effectively serve as a corrective to the processes that could lead to endangering of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and ensure active engagement of the affected parties, including the institutions competent for different spheres of the management.

The international mechanism for joint management between Republic of North Macedonia and Republic of Albania is based on the Joint Management Committee.

The final Management Plan will be formally submitted to the World Heritage Center, following translation into English.


e. Implement all other previous Committee requests and the 2017 mission recommendations;

Wastewater Management System (Recommendation 13)

During the reporting period, the Republic of North Macedonia intensified the activities for sanitation and rehabilitation of the wastewater management system of Lake Ohrid. The State Party allocated 183 million denars (2.9 million euros) in the second half of 2019, which resulted in a tendering procedure for the system Ohrid-Struga, with no. 11130/2019 dated 30.10.2019. The procedure was completed and an Agreement was signed with the selected contractor under number 03-40/1 dated 12.12.2019.

The field works for the sanitation and rehabilitation of the wastewater management system began on 16.12.2019. This first phase of the works is planned to last until June 2020. The sanitation process includes identifying and clearing out the most clogged locations where overflow of wastewater in Lake Ohrid occurs. The process is conducted via infiltration of pipe into pipe by using the CIPP method. This method avoids excavations and digging works which may potentially infiltrate residue into the pipe system that could increase the expulsion of wastewater.

Over six months, at least 20 pumps are planned to be repaired, and at the same time the pre-pump stations will also be repaired in order to ensure better flow of wastewater through the pipes to the treatment plant, where the water will be
treated accordingly and released into Crn Drim River basin. During this phase of the field works, the main pipelines of the secondary sewage systems in Ohrid and Struga will also be cleared.

Furthermore, in cooperation with the City of Ohrid, the Public Enterprise for Wastewater Management is considering potential solutions for separate treatment plants for the villages Trejca and Ljubanista, as well as extension of the pipeline to include the village of Radozda in the Municipality of Struga (border with the Republic of Albania).

For the fiscal year 2020, to conduct the works to rehabilitate the wastewater management system on Lake Ohrid, the State Party has allocated a total of 150 million Macedonian Denars (MKD), or 2.4 million euros. In total, for the fiscal period October 2019 - December 2020, the Republic of North Macedonia has allocated a total of 4.2 million euros for the wastewater management system.

Joint management of the property between Republic of North Macedonia and Republic of Albania

Following the significant boundary modification of the property as per World Heritage Committee Decision 43 COM 8B.9 (Baku, Azerbaijan, 2019), the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania intensified bilateral discussions for the purpose of finding a mechanism for joint transboundary management of the property. As a result of the consultations, both State Parties agreed to establish a system for joint management for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region based on the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Ohrid Lake and its Watershed (“Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia” No. 46/2005).

On January 17, 2020, in Ohrid, the Joint Committee for Management of the Watershed of the Ohrid Lake was established in accordance with the long-standing bilateral agreement. During the constitutive meeting, the Rules of Procedure were adopted and the two states coordinated the agendas for the forthcoming Reactive Monitoring Mission. The representatives of the State Parties also discussed possible ways for funding joint projects between the states and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for the purpose of strengthening the capacities for joint management and continuing the positive cooperation established during the UpStream process.

The Mayor of Ohrid was appointed as Chairman of the Committee, while the Mayor of Pogradec was appointed as the Committee’s Secretary. They will serve in their respective capacities for one year, after which the offices will switch. It was agreed that the next meeting will be held in Pogradec in June 2020. The Joint Committee consists of three representatives of the central authority, three representatives of the local authorities, and one representative from the civil sectors of both states.
Diverting the Course of Sateska River/Ohrid Lake Water Levels (Recommendation 15)

The Republic of North Macedonia is implementing a project in cooperation with UNDP, and funded by the European Union, to conceptualize a solution for rerouting the course of Sateska River into Crn Drim River basin, which will be finalized by the end of January 2020. Based on the conceptual design, detailed technical documentation will be prepared by mid-March 2020, followed by construction works on the ground to rerouting of the river course.

The investment for rerouting of the river course will be covered from two funding sources: the project “Improving the Management of Protected Areas” funded by the EU’s IPA Programme (the project ends on May 31, 2020) and the regional project “Integrated Climate Resilience Transboundary Flood Risk Management in the Drim River Basin in the Western Balkans (2019 - 2024)”. The construction of the structures necessary for partial rerouting of the course of Sateska River into Crn Drim River basin is planned to be completed by the end of 2023.

The water levels of Lake Ohrid water are monitored on a regular basis and the release of lake water into the Crn Drim River basin is being controlled by the Power Plants of North Macedonia (ESM), former (ELEM). Water levels are measured two times a day at particular measurement points on the coast of Lake Ohrid. The same measurements are also done, but in different locations, by the Hydrometeorological Institute of the Republic of North Macedonia. Lake Ohrid water level is maintained between the legally determined point from 693.10 MHM to 693.75 MHM, and in exceptional cases of extremely humid years from hydrological aspect up to the point of 694.00 MHM, which points are specified in the obtained Water Economy permit of ESM issued by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Republic of North Macedonia on 25.09.2017 with number UP1-11-21/16.

ESM works to improve the regular monitoring of Lake Ohrid water level and improve transparency. To that end, ESM will acquire and install an automatic hydrometeorological station for measuring the water level, which will be displayed at a suitable public location in Struga. The public procurement procedure for this station has already been realized and the received bids were still being evaluated at the time of the writing of this report. The automatic hydrometeorological station should be put into function at the beginning of 2020.

Functional Waste Collection System/Balkovo Landfill (Recommendation 16)

The Republic of North Macedonia is conducting a comprehensive process for the regulation of solid waste collection throughout the entire territory of the country, including the South-West region.

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MOEPP) with funding provided by the EU’s IPA Program has prepared a regional plan for waste management in the South-West region, including a Feasibility Study with cost-benefit analysis for procurement of the equipment for collection, loading and removal of solid waste.
addition, conceptual designs were prepared for closing and re-cultivation of all non-
standard landfills in the region, including the Bukovo landfill.

Having in mind the fact that in this period grants have not been provided in the
national budget from the available EU programs, MCEPP insisted that an analysis for
determining the optimum funding concept be prepared with assistance from the
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), for the purpose of
realization of the investment which was evaluated with the previous project
supported by EU. This analysis should be completed by the end of February 2020.
According to the preliminary findings, and based on the available investment
programs, it was suggested that credits be combined with an investment grant from
Western Balkan Investment Framework (WBIF).

It is projected that the Government would adopt a decision by the end of the year for
the optimum funding model, thus the investment would commence in 2021. The
Bukovo landfill will be closed once the planned regional sanitary landfill is built. The
procurement of waste collection equipment (trucks and containers) will commence in
2021, which will provide waste collection service in all settlements resulting in
decrease of the number of illegal landfills. The procurement of such equipment will
also ensure improved waste collection from urban settlements, especially during the
tourist season. The construction of the regional system (loading station and regional
sanitary landfill) will commence by the end of 2021, while the closure of illegal
landfills, including Bukovo landfill, will commence at the beginning of 2022.

Traffic regulation in the Old City Core of Ohrid (Recommendation 18)

Throughout 2019, Ohrid Municipality introduced reforms in the traffic regime which
significantly reduced the pressure in the Old City Center, i.e. restriction for using
motor vehicles in the Old City Center. Under this new scheme, only the residents of
the Old City Core are allowed to enter this part of the city which is regulated with
the placement of Internet-connected ramps at the three entrances to the Old City
core. At the same time only one entrance (1 hour) of guests staying in this part of the
city is allowed. These measures drastically reduced the traffic in the Old City core.
The new system for payment and control of parking (via SMS) was put into operation
on 07.07.2018.

During the period May-June 2019, the Municipality of Ohrid introduced new parking
zoning in the center of the city. The new system, limiting parking times, and the
introduction of an increased premium price of 100 Macedonian Denars (MKD) for an
hour of parking, significantly reduced traffic concentration in the center.

Recommendation 19

Ohrid Municipality removed all commercial billboards placed along the city quay and
the surrounding areas for the purpose of preserving the authenticity and integrity of
the property, as well as conservation of the appearance and the autochthonous
vegetation. The billboards are permanently removed and the Municipality does not plan to install such commercial billboards which could lead to disruption of the authenticity and the visual impact of the property (except for the three billboards for which the Municipality has initiated procedure for contract termination). At the same time, Ohrid Municipality removed 200 inauthentic types of trees - palms which were planted along the quay and the coastline.

With regards to taking measures for prevention of loss of archaeological remains and endangering of the coherence of the architecture and urban planning, in relation with the Report on the State of Conservation of the Natural and Cultural Heritage in the Ohrid Region submitted on 29.11.2018 (Ref.No.34-11732/24), we have informed the World Heritage Centre about the obligations and procedures deriving from the national legal regulation.

Namely, in accordance with the Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage ("Official Gazette of RM" no. 20/04, 115/07, 18/11, 148/11, 23/13, 137/13, 164/13, 38/14, 44/14, 196/14, 104/15, 154/15, 192/15, 39/16, 11/18 and 20/19), the archaeological researches are carried out by experts and competent institutions based on permit issued by the Directorate for Protection Cultural Heritage which, among other things, determines the area in which the archaeological researches can be carried out, the type and scope of activities and conditions under which they can be carried out. The archaeological research is carried out in accord with the issued permit and the appropriate methodology.

In accordance with the Law on protection of cultural heritage and in order to create permanent economic and other social conditions for preservation, revitalization and functional use of the immovable cultural heritage, its protection is one of the basic goals of the spatial and urban planning. Hence, in the course of physical and urban planning, depending on the type and area of the plan, an obligatory coverage and respect of the immovable properties is ensured, which likewise includes the archaeological remains are protected in accordance with the provisions of the Law. Protective regime has been elaborated with regards to the planning, arrangement and use of the space according to the relevant protection-conservation bases for cultural heritage (documentation basis for treatment of the immovable cultural heritage, in spatial and urban plans). When preparing the draft of spatial and urban plan, the designer of the plan is obligated to respect the protection-conservation bases for protection of the cultural heritage. In cases when an urban plan has not been adopted, the conditions for construction a building or undertaking direct protection measures, that directly or indirectly threatens the integrity of the protected property i.e. protected area, also protection-conservation conditions prescribing the actions that can or cannot be taken with regards to preventing harm to the integrity of the protected property.

Such procedures are implemented by institutions for protection i.e. National Institute for the Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum - Ohrid, competent for the territory of Ohrid Region.
10. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2020, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session in 2020, with a view to considering, in case of the confirmation of the potential or ascertained danger to its Outstanding Universal Value, the possible inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

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The SoC Progress Report was adopted at a session of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, held on January 28, 2020 (No. 44-927/1 from 28.01.2020).

***

The State Party gives its consent to upload the present SoC Progress Report for public access, without annexes.

Signature of the Authority

Edmqaed-Alemi

President of the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of North Macedonia

This report was prepared by the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of North Macedonia, in cooperation with the Office of the Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, the Environment Directorate, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Public Enterprise for State Roads, Macedonian Railways - Infrastructure, the National Park Galicica, the Hydrobiological Institute - Ohrid, ESM-Macedonian Power Plants, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Museum - Ohrid, the Municipality of Ohrid, the Municipality of Struga, and the Municipality of Debrca.
FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF
STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS
BY THE STATES PARTIES

(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines)

WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY – NATURAL AND CULTURAL
HERITAGE OF THE OHRID REGION - (Republic of North Macedonia) (C/N 99ter)

State of Conservation Progress Report of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of
the Ohrid Region on the Implementation of the Recommendations from the World
Heritage Committee Decision (43 COM 7B.36)

Name of the World Heritage Property: Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (Republic of North Macedonia) (C/N99 ter)
Date of inscription: 1979
Extension: 1980, 2019
Minor boundary modification inscribed year: 2009
Criteria: (i) (iii) (iv) (vii)

Executive Summary of the Report:

The Republic of North Macedonia remains firmly committed to preserving the World Heritage status of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region. This State of Conservation Report for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (Republic of North Macedonia) aims to emphasize the State Party’s intensified efforts to implement World Heritage Committee Decision (43 COM 7B.36), fulfill the recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring Mission (2017) and strengthen the bilateral cooperation with the Republic of Albania towards effective joint management of the property.

During the reporting period, the Republic of North Macedonia adopted the Management Plan for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (2020–2029). Following the Plan’s adoption, the Management Commission intensified its work to ensure that all plans, projects and activities in the Region are harmonized with the protection parameters determined in the Management Plan. In 2020, the Commission considered 71 requests in total. Of those, 49 were not adopted and were returned in order to be aligned with the provisions of the Management Plan. 19 requests were accepted, while 3 requests were fully rejected as being potentially harmful to the Ohrid Region OUV. Additionally, the Commission maintained regular communication with the institutions at the central and local level to ensure timely and complete implementation of recommendations.

The Republic of North Macedonia is committed to strengthening its collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, in full compliance with the Convention’s Operational Guidelines. In this context, an Advisory Mission was conducted in December 2019, and a project proposal for rehabilitation of the Ohrid quay was harmonized. Significantly, the Republic of North Macedonia completed the first stage of the Lake Ohrid wastewater management system rehabilitation and reparation; an endeavor for which 4 million Euros were invested from the state budget in just one fiscal year. Furthermore in 2020, the Sateska River diversion project continued. Structural construction necessary for the partial redirection into the Crn Drim riverbed is planned to be completed by the end of 2023 at the latest.
Following the adoption of World Heritage Committee Decision 43 COM 8B.9 (Baku, Azerbaijan 2019), and the approval to extend the property boundaries to include the Republic of Albania, both States Parties established a joint management system. A Joint Management Committee was established, and despite the challenges posed by the health pandemic, during 2020, two meetings between the States Parties were held.

The Republic of North Macedonia is fully committed to implementing the World Heritage Committee Decisions, with the purpose of developing and implementing measures to meet the most urgent recommendations outlined in the 2017 Reactive Monitoring Mission. Some of the corrective measures are already implemented and some are expected to be finalized during 2021.

In 2021, in accordance with the Management Plan, the tourism-development zone Ljubanishta 1 was annulled. During 2021, a separate detailed urban plan will be developed for the entire coastline of the lake, in line with the Management Plan. The legally prescribed deadline for the proclamation of the Studenchishta Marsh as a protected zone is underway. The process is scheduled to finish by June 2021. Additionally, in accordance with the legal deadlines and the planned dynamics, the Law on Proclamation of Lake Ohrid as Monument of Nature is expected to be adopted in October 2021.

Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee:

Decision: 43 COM 7B.36

The World Heritage Committee:

1. Having examined Document WHC/19/43.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decisions 40 COM 7B.68 and 41 COM 7B.34, adopted at its 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) and 41st (Krakow, 2017) sessions respectively,
3. Welcomes the halting of the procedure for modification of the Management Plan of Galicica National Park, specifically its zoning, which de facto has stopped the construction projects of the sub-sections (a) and (e) of the A3 road and the Galicica ski resort within the property, however, considers that this step is not sufficient to significantly reduce the vulnerability of the property.
4. Also recalling its decisions supporting the conclusions of the 2017 Reactive Monitoring Mission that the overall state of conservation of the property was vulnerable to various threats and, if the priority recommendations were not implemented within a two-year framework, the property could meet the criteria for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.
5. Notes that partial progress has been made in implementing urgent Committee requests and recommendations including the delayed implementation of key
milestones with no revised timeframe being proposed, especially the moratorium on any transformation within the property, the inventory of illegal buildings and the demolition of those negatively impacting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, the approval of all relevant planning instruments, including the Management Plan, as well as other key recommendations of the 2017 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/UCN Reactive Monitoring mission.

The remarks are further addressed in the Report.

6. Also notes that the State Party is not regularly informing the World Heritage Centre of projects and planning activities being developed within the boundaries of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

Over the past year, the Republic of North Macedonia has focused on increased collaboration with the World Heritage Center and full compliance with the Operational Guidelines. In accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines the State Party in September 2019 submitted the project documentation on “Project for Reconstruction of the Ohrid Quay” to the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies. Some of the open issues were also discussed during the Reactive Monitoring Mission in January 2020. Additional documentation was shared with the mission experts, including graphic designs of the proposed project.

As a result of the discussion during the Reactive Monitoring Mission and the guidelines outlined in the draft Mission report, the Municipality of Ohrid accepted the recommendations about the quay expansion and adjusted the project documentation accordingly.

The corrected project for the “Quay Macedonia” has been redesigned without additional extensions towards the lake. The updated project envisions removal of the existing quay structure (100 cm) from the edge of the lake. The process will entail:

- Wooden panels 2x1.5 m to be placed 2 meters from the old quay in order to prevent any kind of construction waste discharge;
- Old concrete slabs will be removed manually;
- The 25 cm concrete layer is going to be cut with a concrete machine;
- The old and ruined part of the quay is going to be removed slowly and carefully, step by step, in stages not more than 100 m down the quay itself;
- After the new pillars with a diameter of 80 cm are placed, the wooden panels will be removed;
- The same procedure is going to be implemented in stages down the quay itself until the reconstruction of Quay Macedonia is complete.
Regarding the architectural design, urban equipment, illumination as well as the park greenery, we confirm that the existing illumination system (placed in 1960) will be renewed with reparation of the brass pillars and their replacement. A new illumination system is not planned and the current urban equipment and vegetation along the quay itself will be preserved in its current state.

The “Quay Macedonia” reconstruction project aims to repair the current poor condition of the quay (visible from the photographic evidence), without further encroachment into the lake.

Annex 1: The “Quay Macedonia” redesigned reconstruction project (within existing size) without expansion into the lake and the current quay condition (photographs attached).

In line with the recommendations outlined in the Reactive Monitoring Mission (2017), and per the need for expert input from the Advisory Bodies by the Public Enterprise for State Roads (PESR), the State Party requested an Advisory mission from the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies in order to remove any outstanding questions and dilemmas regarding the existing and proposed road infrastructure projects in the Ohrid Region. The Advisory Mission took place in the period December 10-11, 2019 in Skopje.1 In response to the ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory mission report, PESR sent a notification to the World Heritage Center with clarifications for the taken measures and continues to collaborate with UNESCO on this subject.

7. Notes with concern that the State Party has not yet addressed the recommendations on the Railway corridor VIII, despite the Committee’s request to consider alternative routes outside the property and outside the extension proposed by the State Party of Albania; and also with highway stretch A2 Trebenishta – Struga even though an adequate Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has not been undertaken of the overall impact of this road on the OUV of the property, and reiterates its request to the State Party to urgently identify optimal solutions for these projects, avoiding impact on the OUV of the property and the extension proposed by the State Party of Albania;

Regarding the recommendations from the 2017 Reactive Monitoring Mission Report, a serious analysis of the Corridor 8 listed projects was made by the competent institutions. Subsequently, the UNESCO recommendations have been accepted and the projects have been temporarily halted. The proposed railway section is a long-term infrastructure project in its early stage, for which no funds are being provided. In light of the Reactive Mission recommendations, the Republic of North Macedonia divided the railway project in two separate phases – from Kichevo to Struga and from Struga to the Republic of Albania. The State Party will initiate a procedure for finding potential funding sources/loans for the section to Struga. Regarding the Struga-Republic of Albania section no additional steps will be taken.

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1 Report on joint ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory Mission to the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (North Macedonia part), 10-12 December 2019;
Following the boundary extension of the property, the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania are initiating a dialogue aimed at producing a joint analysis for a potential alternative route. PE Railways of the Republic of North Macedonia Infrastructure – Skopje initiated contact with its partner institution in the Republic of Albania for establishing a group of experts that is going to work on the analyses in 2021. This issue will also be discussed between the two governments at a higher political level, via the existing the bilateral cooperation initiatives.

Regarding other issues related to section A2, see the explanation within item 6.

8. Notes with satisfaction that the State Party’s action on the long-term projects including the waste water management system and redirecting of River Sateska, and furthermore welcomes the Government’s adoption of Law on Management of the Natural and Cultural Heritage in the Ohrid Region, as well as the Government Decision taken in June 2019 tasking all relevant domestic institutions to implement the recommendations of the World Heritage Centre;

More information regarding the wastewater management system and the Sateska River project further in the Report.

9. Strongly reiterates its requests to the State Party to
   a. Establish a moratorium on any urban and coastal transformations within the property until all relevant planning documents have been finalized and adopted, effective protective regulations have been approved and effective control mechanisms established.

Tourism development zones Ljubanishta 1 and 2

The 2017 Reactive Monitoring Mission Report noted the tourism development zones Ljubanishta 1 and 2. We point out that the zone Ljubanishta 2 does not exist and there are no plans for such development. A location was taken into consideration during 2015-2016, but since then the idea for a tourism development zone was abandoned. To date, no legal or administrative measurements have been taken for its establishment. Regarding Ljubanishta 1, we inform that with a Decision by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia number 40-653/1 from 19 January 2021, the “Decision on establishing the tourism development zone Ljubanishta 1” (Decision published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 59/15) is no longer valid. Consequently, the tourism development zone Ljubanishta is formally abolished, and it seizes to pose any potential threat to the Ohrid Region’s OUV.

Annex 2: Government Decision
More information regarding the moratorium on urban and coastal transformations further on in the Report (Recommendation 6).

b. **Inventory illegal constructions, assessing their impacts on the OUV of the property through appropriate HIA and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes and proceed to demolishing all those which represent a threat to the property,**

c. **Ensure strict enforcement of laws and regulations to prevent any further illegal construction,**

As it was notified in the Progress Report submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Center from February 2020, in accordance with an instruction of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Ministry of Transport and Communications in cooperation with the municipalities within the boundaries of the property and the Galichica National Park, prepared an inventory of illegally constructed buildings in that Region.

In parallel, the Municipality of Ohrid began removing some of the illegally constructed buildings on its territory. Bearing in mind that this is a complex process followed by numerous administrative procedures, as well as significant financial implications for their removal, the Ministry of Transport and Communications established a working group tasked with the preparation of an Action Plan with priorities for removing illegally constructed buildings removal.

In accordance with the Reactive Monitoring Mission recommendations and the current state legal framework, after the finalization of the Environment Impact Assessment and/or Heritage Impact Assessment, the process dealing with illegally constructed structures will be implemented (legalization, or removal in case of an assessment that they have a negative impact and pose a threat the values of the Region).

**Annex 3:** Photos from the removal activities in Municipality of Ohrid

More on illegally constructed buildings in the Recommendation 9 response.

d. **Finalize the Management Plan for the property and align all relevant planning instruments with the overall aim of protecting and sustaining the OUV of the property and submit the draft to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, prior to its finalization and adoption**

The final, translated Management Plan for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (2020-2029) including the Action Plan was submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Center in April 2020.

e. **Implement all other previous Committee requests and the 2017 mission recommendations:**

**A2 Highway (Recommendation 2 and 3):**

Regarding the Reactive Monitoring Mission recommendations on the A2 Highway Trebenishte-Struga construction, as well as the construction of Struga - the border with the Republic of Albania section, in December 2019 at the invitation of Republic of North Macedonia, a joint ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory Mission took place. The Mission, together with the relevant institutions and the Public Enterprise for State Roads looked at potential possibilities for decreasing any negative impact of the A2 Highway Trebenishte-Struga, as well as the proposal of the section route Struga - the border with the Republic of Albania (Report on the Joint ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory mission to the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (North Macedonia), 10-12 December 2019 - https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/documents/). Ongoing redesign of the project for the construction of the Highway A2 section Kichevo-Ohrd was discussed with the international experts, especially regarding the sections that are stretching fall within the boundaries of the property, Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region.

As per the Advisory Mission Report, the following activities have taken place:

- **Assessment of cumulative impacts of the railway and highway A2 on the OUV** - The Strategic Environment Assessment Report, the Ohrid Region cultural and natural heritage protection 2019-2028, in item 2.3.6 assesses the cumulative impact of infrastructure projects in the region, including the Kichevo-Lin railway (route from the EIA study) and highway A2 section Trebenishtet-Struga. Plans for the route Highway A2 and the measures for mitigating the impact on the environment and the cultural heritage, together with the choice of the route of the railway Kichevo-Lin line is an activity of the Plan itself, which should be implemented by October 2021.

- **Consider mitigation measures for water pollution along the whole Highway A2 alignment, inside and outside the World Heritage property** – this problem will be solved by redirecting Sateska River in the old riverbed, from flowing into the Lake Ohrid to confluence with the Crn Drim River. Oil catchers are also provided at each outlet which should be regularly cleaned by a company engaged by PESR, as stipulated by the Basic Design for Oil Separators for all sections individually.

- **All dumpsites and new quarries should be located outside the World Heritage property** – the recommendation is taken into account in the course of construction the sections of Corridor 8, locations for surplus excavated earth material are going to be found outside the boundaries of the protected...
area. Regarding the construction of the section Kichevo-Ohrid, the Commission for Managing the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region gave a negative opinion for the proposed dumpsite location within the property suggested by Public Enterprise for State Roads, and the dumpsite will be abandoned.

**Present visualizations from the major viewpoints on possible impacts on the integrity of the World Heritage property** – Visualization analyses will be taken into consideration in the Terms of References of tendering processes regarding the implementation of the action from the Plans of the route of Highway A2 and the measures for mitigation of the impacts on the environment and the cultural heritage, in synergy with the choice of the route of the railway Kichevo-Lin.

**PESR to request from the contractor to work together with the Hydrobiological Institute in Ohrid regarding the monitoring of impact on the Lake Ohrid** – PESR and the engaged Contractor and Supervisor have already established contacts and cooperation with the PSI Hydrobiological Institute in Ohrid. The contractor has hired an accredited laboratory that monitors the quality of the Sateska River thus the condition and quality of water is constantly monitored.

**If the modification of the route cannot be envisaged, to plan the highway runoff water management and the drainage system of the agricultural lands as an entity and explore a range of feasible water pollution mitigation measures** – In the Trebenishte-Struga highway drainage project a technical solution was given for capturing the surface and groundwater and directing it to the nearest culvert. Surface waters are collected by transverse slopes that are part of the road construction and are directed toward ditches and gutters. Atmospheric sewage also drains water from the bed. For the collection of these waters, as well as for the collection of drainage waters from the arable land, a large number of drainage canals have been made which bring these waters into the two collection canals that extend on the left and right side of the highway route. The water from these canals will flow into the Crn Drim River and not in Lake Ohrid. At the places where the canals intersect with the route of the road, culverts are provided for the passage of water under it. During reconnaissance of the terrain, the number of culverts, their type and their size were determined, so a total of 46 (forty six) are envisaged for the entire section. 88 (eighty eight) oil catchers are also provided to maintain water quality.

Consider an alternative route for the Highway A2 Struga-Kjafasan section 3 through the Frangovo valley, further from Lake Ohrid – All recommendations given for section 3 Struga-Kjafasan will be taken into consideration during the preparation of the Term of Reference for the designing process.
A3 Highway and Ski Center in the “Galicica” National Park (Recommendation 4 and 5):

The recommendations regarding the express A3 road construction and the ski center within the frames of Galichica National Park have been fully realized. The Public Institution Galichica National Park (PINPG) has stopped the process of amending the Management Plan for Galichica National Park for the period 2011-2020, and has thus stopped the processes related to the ski center construction (notified in the Progress Report for implementation of the recommendations from the World Heritage Committee Decisions 41 COM 7B.34, number 34-11732/24 on 29.11.2018).

Despite the considerable decrease of number of tourists who visited the National Park in 2020 due to the imposed COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, Galichica in 2020 renewed the infrastructure along the path system (250 km marked pedestrian and bicycle paths) and modified all information and location boards and road maps.

At the same time, we inform that a Draft Management Plan for Galichica National Park is being prepared for the period (2021-2030) of which the Galichica National Park Environmental Education Strategy (2021-2025) and National Park Galichica Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy (2021-2025) are an integral part. A draft Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment of the Management Plan has also been finalized. These planning documents have been submitted for initial review by the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning. They are going to be submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Center for consideration before being adopted.

Establishing moratorium on each coastal and urban transformation (Recommendation 6):

In July 2019, following the adoption of the World Heritage Committee Decision (43 COM 7B.36, Baku Azerbaijan), the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia instructed the municipalities of Debrca, Ohrid and Struga to temporarily suspend issuing building and legalizations permits on the territory of the property. In accordance with the Government recommendation and the existing legislation in the Republic of North Macedonia, the municipality councils adopted decisions on temporary suspension of adoption and implementation of urban plans and procedures for determining the legal status of illegally constructed buildings (The Council of Municipality of Ohrid adopted the Decision number 08-11700/3 on 08.08.2019, Official Gazette of Municipality of Ohrid number 10/2019; The Council of Municipality of Struga adopted the Decision number 08-3344/8 on 14.08.2019, Official Gazette of Municipality of Struga number 14/2019; and The Council of Municipality of Debrca adopted the Decision number 08-1719/13 on 19.08.2019, Official Gazette of Municipality of Debrca number 09/2019). During 2020, the Councils of Municipalities of Ohrid, Struga and Debrca adopted new Decisions on the manner of implementation of the existing urban plans and urban-planning documentation, as well as on temporary suspension of procedures for determining the legal status of illegally constructed buildings valid till
01.10.2020 (Decision of the Council of Municipality of Ohrid number 08-3172/3 of 18.03.2020, Official Gazette of Municipality of Ohrid number 4; Decision of the Council of Municipality of Debarca number 08-1333/13 of 31.07.2020, Official Gazette of Municipality of Debarca number 08/20, i.e. Decision for temporary suspension of adoption and implementation of urban plans, and procedures for establishing the legal status of illegally constructed buildings (Decision of the Council of Municipality of Struga number 08-1861/5 on 03.06.2020, Official Gazette of Municipality of Struga number 08/20):). It should be noted that despite the expiration of the decisions, the municipalities act in accordance with the Management Plan for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region in relation to urban planning.

Crucial role in establishing a controlled urban planning regime in the Debarca, Ohrid, and Struga municipalities has been played by the Management Commission for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region. Following the adoption of the Management Plan, the Commission has given its maximum to ensure proper implementation of the Plan focused on protecting the values of the property for which it is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Therefore, the Commission, in its capacity as a coordinative and advisory body, focused exclusively on the proper implementation of the protection regimes and measures outlined in the Plan, with the aim of respecting the established good practices for humane living, preservation of the landscape and all other elements that contribute to the Region’s OUV.

The State Party notes that in 2020 the Commission dealt with a total of 71 urban planning cases, out of which 49 were not approved and were returned for harmonization with the Management Plan i.e. additional documentation submissions, 19 requests received a positive response, while 3 requests were fully rejected as being harmful for the Ohrid Region values.

After the adoption of the Management Plan for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (January 2020) all approvals (for construction) based on the new urban plans are in accordance with this Plan, thus resecting the protection regimes, measurements regarding the building height and the percentage of land used for construction.

At the same time, it was pointed out to the Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage and to the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Cultural - Ohrid, that until the adoption of the Ohrid Region new detail urban plans harmonized with the Management Plan, the conditions for building construction, i.e. measures for protection of the integrity of the protected area, must include protective conservation requirements issued by the Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage, prepared by the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum Ohrid. These provisions should be notified when the Ohrid, Struga and Debarca municipalities issue construction conditions.

Taking serious note of the remark on the uncontrolled urban transformation that stems from the poorly managed urban planning process in the past period, in the stated Conclusion of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia it has been indicated to the
municipalities of Ohrid, Struga and Debar to initiate the process of amending and supplementing the existing urban plans under the jurisdiction of their municipalities, for the purpose of harmonizing them with the Management Plan. In these procedures the opinion of the Commission for Managing the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region is mandatory.

The 2000 Ohrid urban plan provided for a marina in the Studenchishta channel. However, following the adoption of the Management Plan, the construction of a marina in the Studenchishta channel is not possible. Furthermore, we note that the promenade along the Studenchishta channel consists of stone and wooden pillars that are used for attaching/anchoring small boats.

Annex 4: Studenchishta channel promenade condition – photos.

Regarding an alleged Ohrid ring road project mentioned in the Draft Report of the Reactive Monitoring Mission from January 2020, we point out that this is an old and abandoned idea. Such a project, project development or any project documentation does not exist.

Planning Documentation Finalization (Recommendation 7)

The Management Plan for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region was adopted by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia in January 2020 and it was submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Center in April 2020. Its adoption initiated the process of harmonization of the urban plan documentation with the provisions of the Plan. The Ministry of Transport and Communications is responsible to act upon the preparation of the necessary planning documentation, as per the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia Decision (number 44-10330/1 from 7 December 2020).

Subsequently, the Ministry’s 2021 Annual Program for financing urban planning includes the Urban Plan of State Importance for the Shoreline of Lake Ohrid, a major action point in the Management Plan. At the 39th session of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia held on 16.01.2021 the 2021 Annual Program was adopted. The upcoming DUP (detailed urban plans) will implement the protection provisions from the Management Plan.

Illegal constructions and inventory of the illegal constructions (Recommendation 9)

The Ministry of Transport and Communications established a working group to draft an Action Plan on how to proceed in regards to the inventory of illegally constructed buildings in the Ohrid Region. The working group is updating the inventory and mapping out structures, which will be followed by demolition. The preparation of environmental and cultural heritage impact assessment – is a considerable challenge due to the lack of a national
methodology and legal bases for the implementation of this activity. The State Party is considering the possibility of incorporating the practice of Environment Impact Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment into national legislation, as well as the possibility of requesting the UNESCO Advisory Mission to assist state authorities in improving the domestic regulations and practice. The National Park Galichica actively participated in the preparation of the illegal buildings inventory. Additionally, it submitted to the Ministry of Transport and Communication, data on illegal structures on the territory of the National Park that should be a demolition priority. This kind of request is motivated by the fact that this kind of illegal buildings are located in a natural zone, where according to the Management Plan of Galichica National Park, urbanization is not allowed due to the concentration of natural values and the need for their protection. In addition to continual direct protection performed by its employees (park rangers) National Park Galichica regularly informs the Municipality of Ohrid about all registered buildings, and requests from the construction inspectorate to inspect whether the investor has provided the necessary documents. The police actively participated and supported the national park in the collection of the data.

Progress regarding the demolition of illegally constructed buildings was achieved in 2020 (noted in the progress reports given by the State Party up till now). The process is ongoing; however, a longer time frame is needed for the implementation of this activity, bearing in mind the complexity and the administrative procedures for its implementation.

The Municipality of Ohrid, which the demolition of some illegally constructed buildings on its territory, was given an additional 6,000,000 denars (97,000 EUR) by the Ministry of Transport and Communications as support for the implementation of the demolition activities of the illegally constructed buildings.

**Strengthen transboundary cooperation with the State Party of Albania in the protection and conservation of the property, in particular on monitoring the lake’s biodiversity and water quality, exchanging relevant scientific data, and establishing common management actions such as jointly agreed fishing quota (Recommendation 12).**

On 02.12.2020 an Agreement was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Albania on mutual sustainable fishing management in the Ohrid and Prespa lakes, which provides for the possibility of mutual fishing cooperation that refers in particular to:

- Sustainable use and protection of fish stock;
- Fishing Management Harmonization that is going to encompass:
  - The minimum allowed fish size according to species;
  - Fishing Ban;
  - Prohibited Fishing Areas;
- Allowed Fishing Equipment (including type, technical characteristics, number and etc.) and practices;
- Fishing Access Regulation;
- Quotas;
  - Fishing Management Information Exchange
  - Illegal Fishing and Smuggling, Deterrence and Elimination
  - Joint Analyses of Data and Information

The procedure for the Agreement entering into force is still ongoing.

**Joint Management of Property between Republic of North Macedonia and Republic of Albania**

The joint bilateral management mechanism between the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania is based on the Joint Management Committee established in January 2020. Discussions with the relevant representatives from Republic of Albania aimed at finding suitable management mechanisms are ongoing. In 2020, only two meetings between the States Parties took place, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Republic of North Macedonia believes that there is a potential and a need for the joint committee membership to be raised to a higher, executive political level, in order to ensure timely and effective decision making and implementation. North Macedonia will initiate a dialogue with the partner State Party on this issue.

**Wastewater Management System (Recommendation 13)**

During 2020, the Republic of North Macedonia intensified the activities to rehabilitate the wastewater management system, as one of the main factors for the protection of Lake Ohrid against pollution. For the purposes of this phase of the rehabilitation efforts, the state allocated 4.149.000 EUR from the annual budget, despite the considerable financial pressures that arose as a result of COVID-19 pandemic.

In the period between December 2019 and August 2020, the State Party conducted full rehabilitation of all critical points of the system, thus preventing any further spillage into the Lake. In accordance with the tendering procedure concluded in December 2019, this process included a number of sequential steps.

Cleaning and repair of the existing pipelines took place at four locations:

- As a first step, a detailed pipeline screening was conducted of the stretch from the old children's hospital/pumping station *Granit* to the hotel *Akvalina*, where access roads were set and the terrain was cleared of vegetation. The next phase entailed high-pressure cleaning of the pipeline and removal of sediments, various materials and construction debris, as well as roots of
vegetation penetrated into the pipeline which brought it to a state of clean pipe. New manholes were built, and the existing ones were repaired with waterproof materials, and the instalation of a F800 pipe in the length of 700 meters with the latest CIPP technology was launched.

- The next rehabilitation took place along the Lagadin beach, where the pipeline was cleaned with the pipe-within-pipe system and a new F600 pipe in the length of 400 meters was installed.

- Along the stretch from Golden Beach to the beach Kadmo the pipeline was cleaned and a F800 pipe was installed in the length of 1400 meters. The Reactive Mission experts in January 2020 had the opportunity to witness this process in person.

- The fourth and last location was along the stretch from the pumping station Dajian/St. Erasmus hospital to the pumping station Podmloje. There was major damage and pipeline disruption at this location, and polluted water spilled into the lake. Following detailed pipeline screening and cleaning, a 500 meter F1000 pipe was installed.

Additionally, during the aforementioned period, the secondary atmospheric sewage was cleaned; 8 km in Ohrid, 6 km in Struga. Also, 20 pumps and 18 re-pumping stations were repaired.

The total length of repaired pipelines at the critical points is about 3000 meters, for which 257,554,057 MKD were spent.

As a result of these interventions, all critical points of the pipeline system where spillage into the lake and its surroundings occurred were repaired. Ground water penetration, a significant problem in the technological process, was also significantly reduced. The protruding roots that clogged the pipeline and led to polluted water overflow were also removed.

For 2021, further removal of clean water infiltration is planned for the wastewater management system at the location Grashnica, as well as at the pre pumping station Struga 3, where the Crn Drim River penetrates the pipeline (40 million denars are needed, c. 649.000 EUR). Further on, energy efficiency improvement is planned (25 million denars are needed – c. 405.000 EUR), (SCADA) system process automation (10 million denars are needed – c. 162.000 EUR), submersible pumps repair (25 million denars are needed – c. 405.000 EUR), swimming pools reparation (15 million denars are needed – c. 243.000 EUR), wastewater treatment station reparation (17 million denars are needed – c. 276.000 EUR)

In addition to the above listed activities, the following investments will be made from funds of the Public Enterprise:

- Working premises extension - 2 million denars
- Pumping station and guard houses roof surfaces rehabilitation - 1 million denars
- Light vehicles procurement- pickups 4 million denars
- Heavy goods vehicles procurement- 3 million denars
- Pumps purchased - 4 million denars
- Environmental reports preparation - 1.5 million denars
- Waste water projects preparation - 1.5 million denars

Annex 7: Photographs of cleaning and rehabilitation of the wastewater management system.

Recommendation 14

The necessary documentation is submitted along with the Progress Report Ref.No. 34-11732/24 on 29.11.2018.

Develop and implement appropriate measures to stabilize the water level of Lake Ohrid, including regular monitoring and control of discharge of lake waters into the Crn Drim River by Macedonian Power Plants company FLEM, and explore options to re-divert the Sateska River back into the Crn Drim River (Recommendation 15).

Measures for water level stabilization and water discharge of Lake Ohrid into the Crn Drim River is regularly monitored and controlled by Power Plants of North Macedonia (AD ESM)-Skopje; measurements are performed daily. Namely, spot height measurement of Lake Ohrid is performed twice a day at a certain measuring point on the Lake Ohrid shore. In parallel with the Lake Ohrid level measurement by AD ESM, the same measurements, but at different levels, are performed by the Hydrometeorological Service of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The level of Lake Ohrid is maintained between the legally determined levels-- 693.10 to 693.75 meters above sea level. In exceptional cases of extremely hydrologically wet years this level is raised up to 694 meters above the sea level, at elevation point listed in the AD ESM water management permit issued by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Republic of North Macedonia on 25.09.2017 number UP1-1-21/16.

ESM will continue to monitor the water levels in the coming period as well.

Furthermore, ESM in the forthcoming period will set up an automatic hydrometeorological measuring station. The measurement results will be a publicly displayed in Struga. For that purpose, a public procurement procedure was conducted, and this procedure is in the final stage. We expect it to be operational in the beginning of 2021.
The Sateska River diversion project is going to be carried out with the help of UNDP; this UN organization supports the preparation of the technical documentation, which will be completed in 2021. Previously, a feasibility study was completed. After the construction project is completed and all necessary permits are obtained, the works to re-divert the Sateska River are going to start in the last quarter of 2021 at the latest.

Additionally, in cooperation with AD Power Plants of North Macedonia an Lake Ohrid rubble cleaning was done at the place where the Crn Drim River flow out of Lake Ohrid, as well bed rubble cleaning in the Struga town area. As a result, around 50,000 m³ of rubble were cleaned. With this project, conditions are being created for easier implementation of the project for diverting the Sateska River into the Crn Drim River.

The Sateska River diversion project consists of four phases:

- River Sateska old bed reconstruction from the village of Volino to the Crn Drim River (8 km);
- Construction of a diversion structure on parts of the Sateska River flow;
- Regulation of the upper course of the Sateska River from Volino village to Klemeshtica village (20 km)
- Rubble sedimentary basin on Sateska River, forestation and other anti-erosion measures for sediment reduction transported by the Sateska River

Moreover, within the new regional project "Adaptation to Climate Change in the Field of Cross-border Flood Risk Management", which is going to be implemented in North Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro with a focus on the confluence of Crn Drim River, activities continue in accordance with the planned dynamics and as a pilot project is planned for the Sateska River to return to its old riverbed.

Within the GEF Project for the Crn Drim Watershed Management Plan Preparation, in 2020 a Draft Lake Ohrid Watershed Management Plan was prepared in accordance with the Water Framework Directive - WFD (www.moep.gov.mk) requirements, as well as a Proposed Project Task for Crn Drim Watershed Management Plan Preparation on the extended area. On November 27, 2020, the Draft Lake Ohrid Watershed Management Plan was discussed and accepted by the Bilateral Committee for Lake Ohrid Management - a body established by the two countries that share Lake Ohrid, namely the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania.

As part of the GEF/UNEP project: “Achieving Biodiversity Conservation through Creation and Effective Management of Protected Areas and Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Planning”, in which the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is the main partner, experts from IUCN and UNEP are currently preparing a Valorization Study of the Monument of Nature – Lake Ohrid. Within the framework of the project, activities have started to prepare a Draft Plan for Management of Lake Ohrid Monument of Nature. The draft Valorization Study for Lake Ohrid is in the final stage and it is being harmonized with
the Management Plan for the World Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region. This will be followed by the adoption of a proposal acceptability Decision on the acceptability of the proposal to declare Lake Ohrid a Natural Monument (April 2021), a public debate (until July 2021) and in line with the legal timeframe, the adoption of the Law on Declaring Lake Ohrid a Natural Monument by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (September / October 2021).

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, on its twenty-first session held on November 17, 2020, adopted the Decision on the acceptability of the proposal to declare the Studenchishta Marsh site a protected area in the natural park category. Activities for the public debate about the proposal are underway, which will be followed by the drafting of a final proposal on declaring the Studenchishta Marsh a protected area in the nature park category, after which the draft law on its proclamation should be made by the Government and adopted in a legal procedure by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (no later than June 2021).

Additionally, due to its natural values Lake Ohrid has been nominated for a Ramsar site in 2020 and in terms of important EU species and habitats protection, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning has identified all three natural lakes in the country, including Lake Ohrid as potential Natura 2000 sites.

**Functional communal waste collection system/Bukovo landfill (Recommendation 16)**

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is making efforts to provide financial funds for the Bukovo landfill closure and recultivation, as well as all irregular landfills on the territory of the property, i.e. the establishing of a functional system of municipal waste collection in the South-West Planning region that encompasses the Ohrid region. For that purpose, a memorandum of Understanding was signed with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Also, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning submitted information to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia on providing financial resources. At the session held on February 2 (No. 40-1805/1), the Government instructed the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning to implement a loan procedure for the establishment of a regional waste management system, which will include remediation at the non-compliant landfills in Struga and Ohrid.

**Annex 5: Government Conclusion.**

**Traffic regulation in the Ohrid old city core (Recommendation 18)**

The traffic regime reforms introduced in 2019 by the Municipality of Ohrid refer to motor vehicles restriction in the old city core. The traffic in the old part of Ohrid is regulated
on all three entrances with ramps and electronic cards (the access is limited to the old town inhabitants only). The street that is parallel to “Quay Macedonia” is closed for traffic, in order to free it the from motor vehicles.


**Implement appropriate measures in order to prevent any loss of archaeological remains and deterioration of architectural and urban planning coherence (Recommendation 19).**

Obligations and procedures arising from national legislation for the purpose of undertaking measures to prevent any loss of archaeological remains and deterioration of architectural and urban planning coherence are noted in the SoC Reports for Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Center on 15.02.2018 (Ref.No. 34-380/57) and on 29.11.2018 (Ref.No. 34-11732/24).

The Directorate for Cultural Heritage Protection in cooperation with the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum - Ohrid continues to implement the legally prescribed obligations for protection of cultural heritage, including the archeological sites that are endangered by the implementation of various infrastructure projects and urban planning. In that context, acting upon the activities planned in the Action Plan of the Management Plan for the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region, working groups established by the Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage prepared amendments to the Rulebook on Cultural Heritage Valorization, Categorization and Revaluation, amendments to the Rulebook on the Content and Methodology for Preparation of Conservation Bases for Cultural Heritage, as well as acts that will improve the cultural heritage treatment in urban planning.


The Republic of North Macedonia gives its consent to upload this SoC Report of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region for public access on the UNESCO World Heritage Center web site without annexes.

Signature of the Authority
Irena Stefoska
Minister of Culture
President of the National Commission for UNESCO of the Republic of North Macedonia