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World Heritage Convention

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## AMENDMENT/PROPOSAL

Agenda Item	8.B
Draft Decision	45 COM 8B.34
Submitted by the Delegation of....	Egypt
Co-author(s) (if any)	
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### TEXT

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/23/45.COM/8B, WHC/23/45.COM/INF.8B1 and WHC/23/45.COM/INF.8B2,

~~2. Defers the examination of the nomination of **Zagori Cultural Landscape, Greece**, under natural criteria, taking note of its potential to meet criterion (x), in order to allow the State Party to prepare a revised and extended nomination for a larger area, which would:~~

~~a) Reconfigure the boundaries of the nominated property to include the entire Northern Pindus National Park;~~

~~b) Reconsider protection and management arrangements for the revised property,~~

~~ensuring that all biodiversity related attributes of the potential Outstanding Universal Value are subject to an appropriate and effective protection and management regime, including a management plan for the revised property that comprises measures on maintaining traditional grazing regimes;~~

**2. Inscribes the **Zagori Cultural Landscape, Greece**, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (v)**

~~3. Also takes note that, whilst the property meets criterion , a number of issues, under cultural criteria, remains to be addressed to fulfil the integrity, authenticity, and management requirements, and~~ **Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:**

## Brief Synthesis

Zagori Cultural Landscape is located in the region of Epirus, in northwestern Greece. The property and its buffer zone contain 45 traditional villages known as Zagori villages (or Zagorochoria) and extend along the western slopes of the Pindus Mountain range. Human presence in the area, dating as early as the Upper Paleolithic, has been always adapted to this seemingly rough and inaccessible environment and was guided by the spirit of self-sufficiency. As a result, an agro-pastoral landscape has been elaborated, focusing on small-scale cultivation, animal husbandry and forest exploitation, and marked by dry-stone constructions such as terraces, mills, threshing floors, sheepfolds, pens, etc. The built environment consisting of unique urban-like residences, commonwealth structures (schools, fountains, churches) inside the villages and an impressive network of stone-arched bridges, took its present form during the 18th and 19th centuries. At that time, it acquired a special architectural identity, the outcome of the mobility of the Zagorisians, and their economic prosperity. Zagori combine the above with the impressive natural environment and dramatic geological formations. It also includes mature and extensive forests, age-old individual sacred trees, groves, alpine meadows, undisturbed rivers and ravines.

Contrary to what happens in most of Epirus and also in most of the Balkan regions, where the architecture of the residence has a largely rural character, in the villages of Zagori, which, as early as the 18th, but mainly during the 19th and early 20th centuries, developed in a truly exceptional way and were urbanized to a significant extent, houses of extremely high standard for the wider area can be found. The nominated property encompasses twenty of these villages in three municipal units of the present Municipality of Zagori: Central Zagori, Tymphi, and Pápigo. The traditional villages are typically organized around a central square containing a plane tree. Each showcases drystone cobbled pathways adapted to the topography, and some are still surrounded by sacred forests maintained by local communities. The central square is dedicated to community life, and functions as a centre for social gatherings and religious events.

## **Justification of criterion (v)**

(v) Traditional villages of Zagori, are an outstanding example of traditional human settlements where the characteristics of the stonework showcased in traditional buildings, stone bridges, stone paths, and stone staircases represent a distinctive culture developed in Zagori. The vernacular architecture, urban structure, and public infrastructure of the villages have been influenced by an exchange with other areas of the Balkan region, Central Europe, Russia, Asia Minor, and Constantinople, where Zagorisians practiced temporary migration. Zagorisians imported ideas and styles to their homeland and provided investments which enabled the

development of this isolated area of the Pindus mountain range. *Zagorochoria* are representative of the common legacy of Byzantine and Ottoman vernacular architecture of the larger Balkan region. This style has become rare in the region, but is still reflected in the traditional stone architecture and traditional village layouts of Zagori.

### **Statement of Integrity**

Zagori Cultural Landscape form a cohesive whole of interconnected cultural and natural elements that coexist in harmony, as they have been co-formed over a period of long duration. The property includes exceptional preserved examples of cultural heritage, small-scale rural mountain landscapes and extensive pastures that have retained their character since the Bronze Age.

The values of the property can be discerned in their entirety whereas the distinctive features of the landscape, both man-made and natural, have maintained their integrity due to the isolation of the area, the mild economic activities that have been implemented so far, as well as the protective framework that has been timely established so as to prevent the degradation of the landscape.

In addition, the further safeguarding of the architectural values of *Zagorochoria* is underway through their declaration in total as a historical site in accordance with the very strict archaeological law and therefore they will be consequently subject to strict control and licensing procedures for all types of works and interventions.

### **Statement of Authenticity**

*Zagorochoria* constitute a rare example of authentic and well preserved traditional settlements within an agro-pastoral landscape and a rich natural environment. The strict institutional framework for the protection of the cultural assets, the maintenance of the use of stone and wood as predominant construction materials, as well as restrictions on building standards regulations have contributed significantly to preserve the authentic character of the settlements of the nominated area. Furthermore, traditional craftsmanship along with the use of authentic techniques and materials never ceased to be implemented – even in modern constructions – and have played an important role to the sustainable management of natural resources.

As a result all the original attributes of the landscape are adequately expressed in the present form of the landscape in a way that the property constitutes today an eloquent example of traditional and customary practices that have been preserved unaltered in time.

## **Protection and management requirements**

Zagori Cultural Landscape is protected through an integrated system that is long established. It comprises the legal framework for the preservation of the multifaceted values of the area, as well as the existence of competent state authorities at both central and local levels, that ensure its implementation. In the frame of its nomination for inscription in the World Heritage List a special Management Plan has been drafted taking into account national and European legislation, UNESCO policies for natural and cultural heritage, and the Sustainable Development Goals, as set out in Agenda 2030.

More precisely, the Management Plan aims at drafting and implementing measures based on five main axes: cultural heritage, built environment / architectural heritage, natural heritage, sustainable development, awareness-raising and promotion. The main body for the implementation of the Management Plan will be the Municipality of Zagori through an Independent Department that will be established within its organization chart. It will be assisted by the Committee for the Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Landscape, which will include representatives of key stakeholders, cultural associations and productive organizations in the area.

### **4. Recommends the State Party to:**

- a) Consider including the villages of Skamnéli and Eláti in the buffer zone,
- b) Prepare documentation on the traditional villages and traditional buildings within the nominated property to create a baseline for the conservation and management of the nominated property as a whole,
- c) Develop a comprehensive conservation plan that considers the stone-arched bridges, the historical paths and staircases, and the traditional villages in a holistic way,
- d) Develop a coordination platform and mechanisms for the management of the nominated property, taking into consideration other designations, institutions, and levels of implementation that overlap with the nominated property,
- e) Include within the proposed management plan a financial programming, a detailed timetable, and a Local Master Plan based on a comprehensive conservation plan,
- f) Develop a mechanism and opportunities for local communities, rights-holders, and other stakeholders to participate in the management of the nominated property,
- g) Develop a risk preparedness and disaster risk management strategy,
- h) Develop a tourism strategy that takes into account the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, and determine scientifically its carrying capacity,
- i) Develop a sustainability strategy for the traditional masonry and building techniques and skills in order to maintain the traditional villages over the long term;

- ~~4. Recommends the State Party to ensure a minimum ecological flow regime in the upper areas of the Aaos River to enhance connectivity for the aquatic fauna and riverine ecosystem and to review current and potential future hydropower plants, ensuring that proposals are not permitted if they could have a negative impact on the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, including on the aquatic fauna of the wider Aaos River catchment;~~
5. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by **1 December 2024** a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session in 2025.
6. Notes with appreciation the State Party's efforts to take a comprehensive and integrated approach to protecting both the cultural and natural values of the nominated property.