

# **Report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site**

## **Historic Center of Odesa**

### **1. Executive summary of the report**

UNESCO World Heritage Property «Historic Center of Odesa» (Ukraine) (By the Decision of the 18th Extraordinary Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee № 18EXT.COM5.2 of January 24-25, 2023, the «Historic Center of Odesa» was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List under the accelerated procedure on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv).

For almost a year, after the decision to inscribe the Historic Center of Odesa on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger was made in January 2023, the State of Ukraine and the executive bodies of the Odesa City Council have been working mainly in two directions.

The first direction is related to the implementation of the recommendations of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, where one of the main recommendations was to change (expand) the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone. The option proposed by the Odesa City Council in June 2023 and agreed with the Scientific and Methodological Council of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine to extend the boundaries of the property to Uspenska Street to the south was not supported by the ICOMOS expert community and UNESCO governing bodies. The next extension option, which fully complies with the Committee's recommendations, was prepared by the municipality of Odesa in October 2023. In the near future, the relevant maps with textual justifications and GIS files will be sent to the UNESCO World Heritage Center (WHC).

Work on the implementation of the Committee's other recommendations is ongoing, and its results largely depend on the military and political situation, which was not favorable in 2023 and did not allow us to focus on the full implementation of all recommendations in a timely manner.

The second direction is related to the actual protection of the Site from threats posed by the military aggression of the Russian Federation. Work in this area was carried out both at the foreign policy level and in field conditions. During the second half of 2023, the Russian Federation carried out five large-scale missile and drone strikes (twice in July, in August, in September, and in November) on the historic part of Odesa. As a result of these attacks, about 100 cultural heritage sites located both on the territory of the World Heritage Site and in its buffer zone were damaged. The municipality spent a lot of effort and resources to repair the damage and help the affected people: recording the technical condition of the damaged to cultural heritage buildings, taking priority measures, resettling people, carrying out emergency and conservation work, etc.

The Odesa municipality facilitated the work of international (UNESCO, ICOMOS, etc.) and domestic experts: it organized access to the damaged sites, provided transportation and security (where necessary), and provided comments and copies of the necessary documents. The UNESCO Office in Ukraine processed the reports prepared by the experts, identified the greatest threats, prepared proposals for the conservation and preservation of the damaged sites, and organized the allocation of funds from the UNESCO Emergency Fund. The Odesa City Council and the UNESCO Office in Ukraine worked closely in 2023, which gives hope for the expansion and development of cooperation in the future, after the military aggression is over.