

World HERITAGE and the Czech Republic

The list of the world heritage is gradually developing based on the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in Paris, 1972.

The main goal of the Convention is to respond to the increasing threats to cultural and natural heritage. The signed countries agreed to ensure the protection and conservation of this legacy that should be passed on to future generations. The World Heritage List includes assets with “outstanding universal value”, as stated by the World Heritage Committee.

The Czech Republic, as the successor of then Czechoslovakia, could enlist the heritage sites since 1991. At this moment, Czech Republic has twelve cultural assets enlisted:

Historic center of Prague (1992), Historic center of Český Krumlov (1992), Historic center of Telč (1992), Church of St. John Nepomucene at Zelená hora (1994), Kutná Hora: Historic center of the town, including Church of St. Barbara and Cathedral of Our Lady in Sedlec (1995), Cultural landscape Lednice-Valtice (1996), Historic rural reserve Holašovice (1998), Gardens and chateau in Kroměříž (1998), Chateau Litomyšl (1999), Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc (2000), Villa Tugendhat in Brno (2001) and the Jewish quarter and St. Procopius Basilica in Třebíč (2003). This overview also shows the diversity of enlisted Czech assets. The National Heritage Institute manages several of these important sites.

The world heritage assets in the Czech Republic are different in size. They include solitary sites as well as large areas, such as the Historic center of Prague or the Lednice-Valtice area. All world heritage sites are of national interest. The country plans to enlist many more sites; some of them are nominated internationally. The future plans are reflected in the Indicative List, including, among others, two projects reaching over the border to Germany.

This is especially true for the large bilateral project Mining Region Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří, coordinated by the Free State of Saxony. The aim of the nomination is to preserve and present the multi-level image of these Central European mountains, with rich history of

mining and numerous valuable heritage sites and monuments. Another large project “Famous Spas of Europe”, attended by 7 countries, is coordinated by the Czech Republic. In this project, the country supports three important spa towns in Karlovarský Region – Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad), Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), and Františkovy Lázně. Germany nominated Bad Ems (Federal State Rhineland-Palatinate), Bad Kissingen (Bavaria) and Baden-Baden (Baden-Württemberg). Also included are Bad bei Wien (Austria), City of Bath (UK), Vichy (France), Spa (Belgium) and Montecatini Terme (Italy).

The protection and preservation of the world cultural heritage is governed by valid legislation in the Czech Republic, including the use of the Operating directives for the Convention Concerning



the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The directives specify, for example, the details of documents necessary to enlist the site in the World Heritage List, procedures in monitoring the conditions of the sites (including periodic reports), etc. Numerous processes and tools are used in the preservation of the world heritage in the Czech Republic, especially grants administered by the Ministry of Culture. The world heritage agen-

da also provides us with many contacts and methodology that can be applied in preservation in general. That's why the National Heritage Institute considers the world heritage agenda one of its core activities reaching well over to education and presentations.

For a long time, the National Heritage Institute has coordinated the national monitoring of the world heritage assets, and is involved in further

international cooperation, including the educational program of the Visegrád countries. The aim of this program is to improve the awareness of the world heritage, and fulfill the plan of the "capacity building" and cooperation of young experts in preservation.

