

Legal GROUNDS of the heritage care

Compared to other European countries, Czech lands were rather slow to adapt the act on heritage care. After a few unsuccessful attempts in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and after the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the first Act No. 22/1958 on cultural heritage was passed in 1958; at the time, heritage care had developed for more than a hundred years. The new legislation was quite strict, and offered a strong and effective tool for heritage protection, even though it wasn't used in full during the totalitarian Communist regime. According to the law, the government protected all heritage sites that fitted the definition, and also some of the mobile items. For record-keeping reasons, they were included in the State List of Cultural Assets. The law defined the principle of territorial protection, the theory

of which had been already made, and overall protection of archeological locations. To provide the required expert quality of protection and care, the Archeological Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the newly established State Institute for Heritage Care and Nature Protection (SÚP-POP) were required to provide statements to all decisions of government bodies that involved the heritage. The due diligence had to be guaranteed by the owner (state in most cases) and the law stated that only qualified professionals could restore heritage items and perform archeological research.

The Act No. 22 also played an important role in the further development, as it enabled the establishment of the State Heritage Care and Natural Protection Centers in all regions. All expert sites started with intense research and also offered methodological assistance and consultations;

however, the results were sometimes quite disappointing. The second Act No. 20 on state heritage care was passed in 1987. This law abandoned the principle of total protection – thereafter, the protection has been limited to the property recognized as cultural heritage by the administrative proceedings, and established heritage zones with loose standards. The assets listed in State Lists have kept their protection; the established heritage reserves too. The Act No. 20 adopted most of other provisions of the predecessor, and has remained, after necessary amendments reflecting changes in the society after 1989, the basic legal standard of heritage care in the Czech Republic.

