

To the Permanent Delegations  
of States Parties of the  
transnational World Heritage  
property 'Ancient and Primeval  
Beech Forests of the Carpathians  
and Other Regions of Europe'  
(Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria,  
Croatia, Germany, Italy, Romania,  
Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine) to  
UNESCO

10 August 2021

**Culture Sector  
World Heritage Centre**

Ref: CLT/WHC/EUR/21/13445

Dear Ambassadors,

As you are aware, at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou (China)/Online meeting, 2021), the World Heritage Committee examined the state of conservation of the following World Heritage property: **Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe**.

You will find attached in **Annex I**, the Committee Decision **44 COM 7B.99**, concerning this property. In this Decision, the Committee requested your authorities to submit an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and on the implementation of its recommendations by 1 February 2022, for consideration at its 45th session.

At its 39th session (Bonn, 2015), the Committee adopted a specific compulsory format for the submission of state of conservation reports by the States Parties. The format is included as Annex 13 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and attached to this letter for ease of reference (**Annex II**). You are kindly requested to use this format for the submission of the report on the aforementioned property, in one of the working languages of the *World Heritage Convention*, English or French (Decision **39 COM 7**) and by the deadline above-mentioned.

I would also like to call upon your authorities to do their utmost to comply with the above-mentioned statutory deadline for the submission of the report in order to ensure sufficient time for exchange and dialogue between your authorities, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies on the issues at stake before the next report to the Committee is produced.

In addition to the examination of individual reports on the state of conservation of properties, the Committee also discussed more general conservation issues and adopted Decisions **44 COM 7.1** and **44 COM 7.2** to clarify its position on a number of current conservation issues and to provide guidance to States Parties in this regard. I therefore strongly encourage you to also consider these decisions.

.../...

Thanking you for your continuous collaboration and support in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, I remain.

Yours sincerely,



Mechtild Rössler  
Director

Enc.

cc: Permanent Delegations of States Parties of the transnational World Heritage property 'Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe' (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, France, North Macedonia, Poland, Switzerland) to UNESCO  
National Commissions of States Parties of the transnational World Heritage property 'Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe' (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine) for UNESCO  
National Focal Points for World Heritage  
UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe  
IUCN

**World Heritage Committee**  
**Extended 44th session (Fuzhou (China)/Online meeting, 2021)**

**Decision: 44 COM 7B.99**

**Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine) (N 1133ter)**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decisions **42 COM 7B.71** and **43 COM 7B.13**, adopted at its 42nd (Manama, 2018) and 43rd (Baku, 2019) sessions respectively,
3. Takes note of the findings of the 2019 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, and requests the States Parties of Albania and Romania to implement all mission recommendations, and all States Parties of this property to jointly implement the following mission recommendations:
  - a) Conduct on-the-ground assessments in the buffer zones and component parts where impactful forestry interventions such as clear-cuts and shelterwood cutting have been permitted, to ascertain the extent to which the effective protection of the respective components might be compromised and the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) negatively affected,
  - b) Enhance the connective and protective functions of the buffer zones and strengthen the integrity of the property by minimizing the use of forestry interventions;
  - c) Ensure that any interventions avoid interference with the natural processes of the beech forest ecosystem taking into account the natural expansion of their surface and to strengthen their resilience,
  - d) Support undisturbed natural processes in all components and their buffer zones through natural regeneration, pro-forestation, aging of forest stands beyond conventional rotation ages, and to not take any decision that may affect the dynamics of such processes after external natural or anthropogenic events, such as fire, within or near the property's components;
4. Welcomes the strict protection applied by the State Party of Albania in its respective components and their buffer zones, and invites other States Parties of this transnational property to consider this approach in the revision of buffer zone management as well as the on-going development of a Guidance document for the buffer zones of the property, in order to ensure that all buffer zones of the property serve as a functional additional layer of protection in line with the *Operational Guidelines*;
5. Appreciates the identification and protection of 2,000 ha of forests in the buffer zones of the Romanian components, however, noting with utmost concern that the current management of the Romanian components' buffer zones does not meet the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines* and may have negative effects on the integrity of the property, urges the State Party of Romania to fulfil its intention to limit interventions in buffer zones and approve new dedicated World Heritage national legislation aimed at safeguarding the OUV of the property;

6. Notes with concern the potential widening and paving of a forest track crossing the property and its buffer zone (national road 66A) as well as potential future activities related to hydropower facilities in the buffer zone in Domogled National Park in Romania, and thus also urges the State Party of Romania to abandon plans to upgrade the national road 66A inside and/or nearby the property, due to the potential impact of this project on the property's integrity and its OUV;
7. Also welcomes the amendment of the Act on Nature and Landscape Protection of Slovakia expanding non-intervention regimes, and notes that the State Party of Slovakia has submitted a significant boundary modification for its components of the property, which has been subject to the evaluation process;
8. Notes with serious concern the level of forestry operations which are currently permissible in the buffer zones of the property, and requests the States Parties of Spain, Romania, Germany, Italy and Ukraine to provide full and up to date details of these activities to the World Heritage Centre by **1 December 2021**, in order to make clear all the locations and the full list of potentially affected component parts and buffer zones, and to convene, in conjunction with the other States Parties, a subsequent technical workshop with IUCN and the World Heritage Centre to consider the means by which concerns over these activities could be resolved;
9. Reiterates its request in Decision **41 COM 8B.7** that special emphasis shall be given to appropriate buffer zone management in order to support undisturbed natural processes with special emphasis on dead and decaying wood, also notes the submission of the "Guidance document on buffer zone management and buffer zone zonation" for review by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN and further urges the States Parties to ensure that interventions are minimised in the meantime, and that the buffer zone Guidance is based on a strict and precautionary approach;
10. Finally requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2022**, an updated joint report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 45th session.

**Format for the submission of state of conservation reports  
by the States Parties (Annex 13 of the Operational Guidelines)**

**Name of World Heritage property (State(s) Party(ies)) (Identification number)**

1. Executive Summary of the report

*[Note: each of the sections described below should be summarized. The maximum length of the executive summary is 1 page.]*

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

*[Note: The State(s) Party(ies) is/are requested to address the most recent Decision of the World Heritage Committee for this property, paragraph by paragraph.]*

If the property is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

Please also provide detailed information on the following:

a) Progress achieved in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the World Heritage Committee

*[Note: please address each corrective measure individually, providing factual information, including exact dates, figures, etc.]*

If needed, please describe the success factors or difficulties in implementing each of the corrective measures identified

b) Is the timeframe for implementing the corrective measures suitable? If not, please propose an alternative timeframe and an explanation why this alternative timeframe is required.

c) Progress achieved towards the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value [Note: this includes conservation issues which are not mentioned in the Decision of the World Heritage Committee or in any information request from the World Heritage Centre]

4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

*[Note: this report will be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>). Should your State Party request that the full report should not be uploaded, only the 1-page executive summary provided in point (1.) above will be uploaded for public access].*

6. Signature of the Authority