

International Expert Meeting: Natural World Heritage in the Alpine region

**Organized by the Working Group “World Heritage”
of the Alpine Convention
In Bern, Switzerland, 14 – 15 December 2010**

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1. Background of the workshop

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee encourages the States Parties to harmonize their Tentative Lists of potential World Heritage Sites at the regional and thematic level. The first steps for these harmonization at the alpine level took place in the last decade with the meeting of Hallstatt (2000) and Turin (2001). The Alpine Conference, that represents the political decision-making body of the Alpine Convention and consists of the Ministers of the Alpine States, decided to build a Working Group on World Heritage in the alpine region. The Alpine Conference give to the working group the following mandate:

- Contribute to the harmonisation of the Tentative Lists
- Determination of Alpine values with the potential of being universal
- Facilitation of the elaboration of proposals for nominations of serial transnational and/or transboundary properties from the Alpine space
- Exchange of experiences with national administrations and the international cooperation areas of the Alpine Convention, explanation of the WG results to the UNESCO WHC

The working group is composed of representatives of the states party (at the exception of Lichtenstein and Monaco) and of observers. Since 2007, this group has produced a background study on World Heritage and Alpine sites, collecting and analyzing the existing documentation, as well as recommendations that were adopted by the Conference of the Ministers of the Alpine Convention in 2009. The next step is to perform a technical screening of new sites with the potential of being inscribed on the World Heritage List in the alpine region, in the aim to contribute to the haarmonisation of the Tentative Lists.

To do this, the group decided on a 2 step methodology consisting in a first call to a large number of experts per e-mail to collect new ideas for potential world heritage. The second step is an expert workshop to complete, analyze and make a ranking of the potential world heritage ideas. For technical and financial reasons the second step consist in two separate workshops that are based on the same methodology: one on natural heritage and the other on cultural heritage. The experts were proposed by the state parties and by the observers in order to cover all the disciplines linked to the world heritage in the alpine region.

This document is the report of the expert workshop on world natural heritage hold on Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th of December 2010 in Bern, Switzerland.

2. Aims

The aim of the workshop is to revise and to analyse the list of potential world natural heritage in the alpine region. The result of these analyse is a list of potential new world natural heritage in the Alps, with a ranking following the potential for the inscription on the World Heritage List and with remarks on the potential follow-up.

Another aim of the workshop is to define a methodology adapted to the ranking of potential world heritage for a geographical region composed of several countries, like the Alps

3. Participants

The participants are proposed by the states parties and by the observers. 14 experts participate at the workshop, representing many important disciplines linked to the natural heritage for the alpine region. The List of the participants is annexed.

4. Methodological Approach

The workshop adopted the following methodological approach:

- a) Presentation on Key terms of WH as well as on Serial/Transnational nominations as a basis for discussion of the proposals
- b) Introduction to the existing list of proposals for potential WH sites (result of 1) the SP Tentative Lists 2) Input from the expert mailing): the facilitator presented the list and explained its origin
- c) 1st round discussion in two working groups (group1 : criterion viii sites, group 2: criterion ix and x sites): this first round included the collection of additional proposals and broad clustering/structuring of the sites as well as a first rough evaluation
- d) 2nd round of working group discussion: discussion of the individual proposals: do they meet the requirements for OUV (fulfilment of criteria, Comparative analysis, integrity, management): this round resulted in detailed "walls" and added a lot of new information to the "grid" (See Table 1)
- e) Discussion and cross-check between the two groups on sites which were relevant for both groups (e.g. Mt Blanc)
- f) Plenary discussion: Prioritisation/Categorisation
The expert group was presented the proposed categories for prioritisation and discussed these categories. This resulted in slightly changed categories (see below); the group agreed on a prioritisation/categorisation of the proposals with detailed reasoning for each proposal (see Table 2)
- g) 3rd round of group discussion: review of proposed sites focussed on integrity/management in order to define possible recommendations/follow-up
- h) Plenary discussion: Discussion of all proposals: expert group proposed recommendations and a recommended follow-up for individual sites (See Table 1)
- i) Plenary discussion: General recommendations/follow-up

5. Results: Revised Lists and Ranking

The workshop achieved the results to agree on

- a) a methodology to assess the potential for world heritage in the alpine region.
- b) a revised list of proposals (including new information, indication on OUV, Comparative analysis and potential follow-up)
- c) a ranking of the proposals (with detailed reasoning)

5.1 Revised List

See Document attached

5.2 Ranking

For the ranking the following categories were identified on and subsequently used:

Category	Indicator
Cat 1: Sites with high potential for the inscription on the World Heritage List first priority (comparable to IUCN recommendation " To inscribe ")	Site fulfils requirements for inscription: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) meets at least one of the criteria (proven by existing Comparative analysis) b) meets conditions for integrity c) has an adequate management system
Cat 2: Sites with high potential for their inscription on the World Heritage List absolute priority, but reservations/remarks, some homework to be done (comparable to IUCN recommendation " To refer ")	See Category 1 But with reservations These could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - management to be implemented - comparative analysis to be further developed etc.
Cat 3: Sites with medium potential for the inscription (comparable to IUCN recommendation " To defer "), means: a significant amount of work needed.	Site only partly fulfils requirements for inscription: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) criteria: Comparative analysis is incomplete; some doubts whether criteria are fulfilled; b) doubts about integrity; indications that the site might have integrity problems c) insufficient management; missing joint management (e.g. serial sites)
Cat 4: Sites with low potential for their inscription; much work to be done to prove OUV for a successful nomination	Site only partly fulfils requirements for inscription: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) criteria: Comparative analysis is weak or not existent; strong doubts whether criteria are fulfilled; b) doubts about integrity; clear indications that the site has integrity problems c) no or weak management
Cat 5: Sites with no success potential at all for their inscription/no priority (comparable to IUCN recommendation " not to inscribe " on the basis of the existing information etc.)	Site does not fulfil requirements for inscription under natural criteria

Results of the Ranking:

The expert group discussed for each proposal the success potential for inscription according to the requirements set out by the Operational Guidelines.

The results are summarised in the following table:

Proposal	I	II	III	IV	V
Monte Bolca (ITA), viii		X Define perimeter Check and adapt management plan to OUV			
Dinaric Karst (ITA/SLO) Serial but partly outside the Alps viii, x		X Do CA for selection of potential components (including Classic Karst); Follow up-Workshop on technical and political level useful Update of TL useful for reconfirmation SLO to lead, opportunity to include crit. x Check potential for CL/mixed			
Alpine Caves & Karst (SUI, SLO, ITA, AUT?, FRA?) vii; viii			X Global CA needed, regional CA to identify component parts Scientific lead SISCAR? Check potential for CL/mixed		
Mont Blanc (ITA, FRA, SUI) vii, viii			X Harmonise TL Start work on protection status Do CA -< lead to vision for MB, define criteria Check mixed nomination		
Alpi Marittime/Mercantour (ITA/FRA) (ix, x)			X Confirm global CA, regional CA, evaluate perimeter vs. integrity; further develop the joint management Check potential for cultural criteria		
South-Western Alps ix				X Need for an in-depth study on potential OUV under criterion ix	
HoheTauern ix					
Berchtesgaden ix					
Karwendel ix					
High Alpine natural grasslands ix					
Megabeds (Julian Alps) I-TA/SLO viii				X More information needed Work to identify potential OUV	
Alpine Creeks (Tagliamento) ITA ix				X not enough information	
Grina/Lake Garda ITA vii, viii				X not enough information	
Garda moraine amphitheater ITA viii				X not enough information	

In general it is clear that based on today's knowledge, there is a limited potential for natural world heritage in the alpine region and that more studies are needed to assess definitively this potential for many proposed sites. Just in two cases the proposed themes/sites have a potential for OUV. One of this possible sites, the Dynaric Karst, is just partly in the alpine region.

6. General Conclusions, Recommendations and Follow-up

The expert group discussed some general conclusions and recommendation for the follow-up of the process:

- The expert group suggested that for each proposal for a nomination is considered an individual contact point is designated to the WH working group under the Alpine Convention. This can be a coordinating person or institution.
- The expert group noted that it would be important to find a way (tool/method) to keep the persons in contact between the different transnational serial (or transboundary) potential nominations in the alpine region and that it would be important to ensure exchange of experience in all the different processes). The WH Working group under the Alpine Convention was identified to be a suitable linking point for the processes on the alpine level.
- The expert group noted that the WH Working group under the Alpine Convention should support potential nomination processes with technical skills and expertise (focus on transnational nominations).
- The expert group recommended that the States Parties should ensure the presentation of the results on the national level (institutional responsible for WH/Tentative List) and should also communicate the results into other relevant processes/working groups/platforms under the Alpine Convention (e.g. the Platform “Ecological Networks”,...).
- Furthermore the expert group recommended to disseminate the results of the “screening process” into the various scientific audiences.

Annexes

- 1) Table with remarks and follow-up
- 2) Background papers
- 3) Agenda of the workshop
- 4) List of Participants