

**Republic of Austria**  
**SOC Report**  
**Historic Centre of Vienna (C 1033)**

**Executive Summary**

Austria welcomes and fully supports the Decision by the World Heritage Committee adopted at its 43<sup>rd</sup> session 2019. We are happy to report about a constant progress in the implementation of measures to meet the requests and recommendations stated by the World Heritage Committee and its Advisory Bodies.

The without a doubt most important progress is that, according to information by the City of Vienna, the projected residential tower on the Heumarkt – Ice Skating Club – Vienna Concert Hall area shall not be realised. Therewith the strongest visual threat for the overall appearance of the World Heritage property can be avoided. As reported by the City of Vienna, “the high-rise with a height of 66, 3 meters is NOT to be built. As is generally known, the high-rise was the primary reason for the World Heritage property being listed as a World Heritage property in danger [...] With regard to the planned hotel and convention centre building, which is to replace the edifice dating from the 1960s, an increase in height as compared to the current building is not excluded.”<sup>1</sup> The final construction volume currently is object to negotiations and investigation. A visual study shall assess the final design and provide an analysis of the impact on the World Heritage property compared to the current project and against the backdrop of the results of the HIA and the Mission Report 2019. The process takes place in close consultation with representatives of UNESCO, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS International.

Further to this, the work on the requested new Management Plan is an ongoing process and an additional Heritage Impact Assessment shall review the development in Schwarzenberg Garden. The results of the latter shall be available by the end of 2020 at the latest. The Management Plan is scheduled for 2021.

An enhanced protection of World Heritage not only in Vienna but in all of Austria shall be guaranteed by new measures and actions established in the Government Programme. This program was released on occasion of the coalition agreement of the newly appointed federal government in January 2020. The anchoring of listed properties of the UNESCO World Heritage in the Austrian legal system, sustainable protection and preservation of cultural heritage and the commitment to the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity and the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage are major focus areas in the Federal Cultural Policy in the next five years.

Finally, we wish to announce that a draft for a Desired State of Conservation at present is work in progress. We will provide the World Heritage Centre with the results as soon as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Official note by the City of Vienna annexed to this report

**Response to:**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/19/43.COM/7A.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **42 COM 7A.5**, adopted at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018);
3. Welcomes the three-stage process implemented by the State Party with the City of Vienna and notes the commitment of the State Party and of the city of Vienna to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and consequently urges all parties to support and pursue:
  1. The proposed two year moratorium on all planning measures which may jeopardize the OUV of the property, especially the Heumarkt Neu project,
  2. Actions to address the findings and recommendations of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the Heumarkt Neu project, including negotiations with the developer to identify and implement mitigation measures which avoid adverse heritage impact,
  3. The recommendations of the 2018 Advisory mission, including:
    1. Reviewing and revising the management structure of the property at the city and national level,
    2. Undertaking a comprehensive review of the current state of conservation of the property, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS and ICCROM) and national and local stakeholders,
    3. Preparing a new Management Plan for the property, based on identification, description and mapping of tangible and intangible attributes of the property,
    4. Assessing the Belvedere Stöckl redevelopment project and other projects currently being executed or planned through an HIA process before they are approved and/or implemented, and halting works until this occurs,
    5. Pursuing legislative protection for the Schwarzenberg Gardens,
    6. Implementing a comprehensive process for continued monitoring and evaluation that is focused on retention of OUV while sustaining the economic growth of the City of Vienna;
4. Reiterates its concern that the current planning controls for the property, and the critical level of urban development reached since inscription with resulting cumulative impacts, require new tools to guide the development process towards sustainable development that protects the attributes which contribute to the OUV of the property;
5. Requests the State Party, based on the findings of the HIA for the Heumarkt Neu project and the 2018 Advisory mission recommendations, to facilitate the preparation of a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and a related set of corrective measures and timeframe for their implementation, addressing Decisions **40 COM 7B.49**, **41 COM 7B.42**, and **42 COM 7A.5**, and the recommendations of the 2012, 2015 and 2018 missions, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, for adoption by the Committee;

6. Encourages the State Party to support and facilitate appropriate measures to manage and conserve the historic roof constructions in the Historic Centre of Vienna as an important attribute of the property, **through appropriate extensions to the roof cadastre**, a moratorium on rooftop conversions until appropriate tools and approvals processes are in place, and also requests that any such changes be referred to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, prior to adoption and implementation;
7. Further requests the State Party to submit, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, final plans for the Wien Museum and Winterthur Building, and detailed plans and supporting documentation for the Belvedere Stöckl redevelopment project, and any other proposed developments within the Schwarzenberg Gardens, for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to implementation or the making of any irreversible decisions;
8. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2020**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session in 2020;
9. **Decides to retain Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

#### **Responses to:**

##### *Para 1 – 3*

Austria welcomes and fully supports the Decision by the World Heritage Committee as it proposes a reasonable timeframe to develop and implement measures to meet the most urgent recommendations stated in the Decision and by the 2018 Advisory Mission. Corrective measures and requested actions responding to the recommendations listed in para 1 to 3 as well as in sub items 1 to 6 / para 3 are already work in progress. Some of the action points will be completed in 2021, the timeframe determined for the elaboration of an alternative design for the “Heumarkt Neu” project.

##### *Sub Item 1 and 2*

As requested by the World Heritage Committee the City of Vienna got in contact with the developer of the “Heumarkt Neu” project to achieve a modification of the project that is in line with the requirements of the World Heritage status of the Historic Centre of Vienna. Consultations between the City of Vienna and representatives of UNESCO, the World Heritage centre and ICOMOS International amplified this process in autumn 2019 and beginning of 2020 with the aim to make sure that the proposed way forward will lead in the correct direction. With official note dated 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019, the World Heritage Manager of the property reported the following:

*Against the background of the decisions of the World Heritage Committee (Bonn 2015, Istanbul 2016, Krakow 2017, Bahrain 2018, Baku 2019), talks were conducted*

*with the owner and project developer for the Heumarkt-Vienna Ice-Skating Club property on an initiative of the City of Vienna.*

*The talks started from the fact that the adoption of the zoning and urban development plan by the Vienna City Council (the parliamentary assembly of the City of Vienna) in June 2017 created a preliminary regulatory basis for the project which had been the object of inspection by the Joint High Level UNESCO World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory Mission (November 2018) and the Heritage Impact Assessment (February 2019). Starting from this legal basis, the owner is entitled to apply for a building permit for the abovementioned project. It should be noted that an evaluation by a superordinate legal body is currently being conducted to establish whether another assessment (environmental impact assessment – EIA) might be necessary.*

*The talks conducted between the City of Vienna and the owner resulted in a commitment on the part of the owner to develop an alternative systemic solution on the condition that UNESCO and ICOMOS principally agree to the fundamental orientation of the efforts for an alternative solution proposal.*

*This alternative systemic solution provides for the following significant modifications as compared to the abovementioned original project:*

- In accordance with the decisions of the World Heritage Committee, the high-rise with a height of 66.3 metres is NOT to be built. As is generally known, the high-rise was the primary reason for the World Heritage property being listed as a World Heritage property in danger on the occasion of the 41st session of the Committee (July 2017, Krakow).*
- With regard to the planned hotel and convention centre building, which is to replace the existing edifice dating from the 1960s, an increase in height as compared to the current building is not excluded, in which case all technical installations (lift shafts, stairwells, ventilation and air-conditioning systems, etc.) would be integrated into the building structure. This is to ensure a uniform, harmonious rooftop silhouette as well as a significant improvement over the status quo (lower building, but with numerous rooftop superstructures).*
- In this alternative project, the ice-skating rink will be fully preserved. Likewise, the measures for upgrading the public spaces will be largely implemented as provided for in the original project.*
- In accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN), the detailed planning will focus on the creation of a “green building”.*

*In the course of bilateral talks between Mr. Ernst Woller, First President of the Vienna Provincial Parliament, as the political representative of the Mayor of Vienna as well as*

*the Deputy Mayor of Vienna with representatives of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS International, a first reaction showed that above all the decision not to build the 66.3-metre high-rise – a key demand of UNESCO and ICOMOS – is regarded as a positive development.*

*A concrete position of UNESCO and ICOMOS in the run-up to the final decision by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session to be held in China in July 2020 regarding these considerations is of great importance.*

*On the basis of a positive decision by UNESCO and ICOMOS regarding this compromise solution, it will be possible to develop an alternative project and take the necessary procedural steps.”<sup>2</sup>*

A visual study shall assess the final design and provide an analysis of the impact on the World Heritage property compared to the current project and against the backdrop of the results of the HIA and the Mission Report 2019. The results will be provided to the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS International for review as soon as possible.

Further to this important progress, there will be additional measures and regulations that shall not only enhance the safeguarding of the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna”, but aim for an overall improvement in dealing with World Heritage in Austria. In reaction to the experience with the World Heritage Site “Historic Centre of Vienna” and to the findings of the above mentioned three-stage-process, the Austrian Federal Government pays special attention to a sustainable legislative reinforcement of Cultural Heritage in general and of UNESCO World Heritage in particular. The Government Programme<sup>3</sup> released on occasion of the coalition agreement of the newly appointed Federal Government in January 2020 (Austrian People’s Party and Green Party), includes the goal "Strengthening Austria's Art and Culture and making it more visible in the world". Specific measures to pursue this goal are:

- Development of an arts and culture strategy
- Legal anchoring of cultural heritage as an asset worthy of protection
- Sustainable protection and preservation of cultural heritage
- Commitment to the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity and the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage
- Anchoring of listed properties of the UNESCO World Heritage in the Austrian legal system
- Continuous development of the Federal Monuments Authority, strengthen its independence, align it to international standards and continue the reform process.

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<sup>2</sup> Official note by the City of Vienna annexed to this report

<sup>3</sup> Aus Verantwortung für Österreich – Regierungsprogramm 2020 – 2024, Page 48

<https://gruene.at/themen/demokratie-verfassung/regierungsbereinkommen-tuerkis-gruen>

These goals and measures constitute a major working field in the framework of the Federal Arts and Culture Policies and shall be prepared and put into practice during the cycle of the current legislators' term. The main competence for the implementation of the Federal Arts and Culture Policies – and thus for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention - starting with 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 lies in the hands of the State Secretary specifically assigned for this task within the Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport.

#### *Para 4*

In response to this concern expressed by the World Heritage Committee, the City of Vienna started a broadly conceived process for the elaboration of a new Management Plan. With official note from 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019, the Manager of the World Heritage property reported the following: *“Based on the decisions of the World Heritage Committee, the development of a management plan for the World Heritage property was initiated. The concrete recommendations specified in the Committee decisions are the subject of technical discussions and will be integrated into the management plan as far as possible. In addition to ICOMOS Austria and the State Party<sup>4</sup>, the development involves further international experts in the field of World Heritage management as well as representatives of civil society. It goes without saying that it is planned to involve the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS International in due course. After completion, the management plan is to be submitted to the Vienna City council for a political decision procedure”<sup>5</sup>.*

The elaboration of the Management plan currently is work in progress. The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS International will be informed about the fundamental steps of the whole process. The final document shall be submitted to the World Heritage Centre after adoption by the Vienna City Council.

The City of Vienna noted that, *“the measures specified are to emphasise the great importance attached by Vienna to being removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger. The City of Vienna is in fact highly aware of its responsibility for dealing with the World Heritage property ‘Historic Centre of Vienna’ with care and in accordance with the tenets of the World Heritage Convention.”<sup>6</sup>*

#### *Para 5*

A draft for a Desired State of Conservation of the property at present is elaborated in cooperation between the City of Vienna, the Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service

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<sup>4</sup> State Party in this context means the ministry in charge for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention: at the beginning of the process the Federal Chancellery, since 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 the State Secretariat in the Ministry for Art, Culture, Public Administration and Sports.

<sup>5</sup> Official note by the City of Vienna annexed to this report

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

and Sport, the Federal Monuments Authority, independent experts from the team working on the management plan, the Austrian UNESCO Commission, ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre. The results of the Three-Stage-Process and the findings of the Missions 2012, 2015 and 2019 together with the related Committee Decisions shall form the basis for the elaboration of the DSOC and the (partly already set about) related corrective measures to attain it. Starting point for any consideration shall remain the State of Conservation as defined at the time of inscription against the backdrop of the developments that caused conflicts with the world heritage status as well as of the ones, which improved the condition of the property. The draft shall be submitted to the World Heritage Centre as soon as possible.

#### *Para 6*

In response to the request by the World Heritage Committee, the Austrian Federal Monuments Authority, in cooperation with the City of Vienna, will extend the Roof Cadastre. The addendum shall enclose iron-construction-works and pay particular attention to the area of the “Ringstraße”. The findings of the Roof Cadastre in its entirety shall also form part of the future management system to be implemented according to the new management plan.

The schedule for the completion of the addendum to the Roof Cadastre shall be defined in the course of the first half of the year 2020. The Austrian Federal Monuments Authority currently prepares the existing Roof Cadastre for publication to make it available not only for the local experts and authorities but also for a wider public.

#### *Para 7*

The **Wien Museum** closed for the public from February 2020 onwards. Currently preparation work for restauration and transformation take place. During archaeological surveys of the area in December 2019, parts of the historic basements of the 1:1 façade mock-up by Otto Wagner in 1909 were excavated.



(© Wien Museum)

The basement of a former shopping hall was already excavated in October 2019. The halls were demolished back in 1934.



(© Wien Museum)

An interdisciplinary experts-team from the Technical University Vienna and the University for Applied Art accompanies the survey. The archaeological finds bring about a comprehensive overview of the history of the area and form a solid scientific basis for the future design of the space in front of the Wien Museum as well as for the reshaping of the building itself.

Since January 2020, the museum is cleared from interior that is not part of the historic, protected furnishing. All parts and objects that are protected by law will be kept in place or stored and replaced. The old control centre, that cannot be used in the future, found a new home in the Federal Technical Museum Vienna. The complete process takes place under the supervision by the Federal Monuments Authority. The Wien Museum informs the public about the ongoing process via its website that is always kept up to date.

The final plans and designs for the reshaping of the Wien Museum are currently under elaboration and will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre as soon as possible.

At present, no definite plans exist for the development of the **Winterthur Building**. The cubic capacity and height-restriction as assessed by the Advisory Mission 2019 remain in place.

The **“Belvedere Stöckl”** (now **“Stöckl im Park”**) opened for the public in December 2019. A HIA will review the actual impact of the project on the historic garden and the consequences for the overall World Heritage property. The HIA shall also encompass the development of the conservation works of the Schwarzenberg Palace and the development of its auxiliary buildings. The HIA will be carried out by order of the Federal Ministry for Art, Culture, Civil Service and Sports. Basis for the Terms of Reference are the results and recommendations of the report by the Advisory Mission 2019. The HIA shall be completed end of 2020 at the latest. It will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS International for review and for presentation on the website of the World Heritage Centre.



Concluding we wish to thank the representatives of UNESCO, the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS International and all the experts accompanying the current workflow for their support and advice. We hope to successfully continue the way towards the re-establishment of a State of Conservation that meets all needs of the World Heritage property.

Annex

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Pröckl', written in a cursive style.

Ruth Veronika Pröckl  
Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport  
Head of Unit II-4a UNESCO World Heritage