



Ramsar Advisory Mission N°94

Venice and its Lagoon, Italy (2020)

(including Ramsar Site N°423 Laguna di Venezia: Valle Averte)

RAMSAR ADVISORY MISSIONS

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands requires its Parties to designate key sites as Wetlands of International Importance ('Ramsar Sites'). Parties commit to maintain the ecological character of designated sites. However, Ramsar Sites can face a variety of challenges, including developments in the agricultural, industrial, infrastructure, residential, tourism and recreation sectors; water management issues that affect water quality and quantity; invasive alien species and climate change. Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAMs) help Parties and site managers respond to threats to the ecological character of Ramsar Sites. They are a means by which the Convention provides technical advice for the management and conservation of listed 'Wetlands of International Importance' whose ecological character has changed, is changing or is likely to change as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference (Resolution XIII.11). RAMs may be conducted jointly with other multilateral agreements or agencies. Advantages of joint missions include increased efficiency from the perspective of the Party, when related international institutions are working together at a practical level, and increased authority and impact of mission findings and recommendations.

JOINT ADVISORY MISSION TO VENICE BY THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE, ICOMOS AND RAMSAR

The World Heritage Committee is following the state of conservation of the property 'Venice and its Lagoon' in the framework of its 'Reactive Monitoring' process since 2014. Upon the request of the Committee, a joint 'Reactive Monitoring Mission' by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands took place in October 2015 (cf. RAM report N°80). At its latest 43rd session, the World Heritage Committee put forward several requests in relation to long-standing issues and a need for the Party to provide further updated information. The Committee concluded Decision (43 COM 7B.86) by requesting an updated report for examination at its 44th session with a view to considering the inscription of the property on the 'List of World Heritage in Danger' (a List with objectives comparable to the 'Montreux Record' of the Convention on Wetlands), if the implemented mitigation measures and the adapted management system do not result in significant and measurable progress in the state of conservation of the property. On 2 October 2019, a meeting was held between the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the Party to discuss the most recurrent issues, as a follow up to the Committee Decision and the measures suggested by the 2015 mission. During this meeting, the Party suggested to host a follow-up 'Advisory Mission' by the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and Ramsar, to support the preparation of the Party report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage property for examination by the 44th session of the Committee. On 11 November 2019, the Party invited for a joint Advisory Mission, which was carried out from 27 to 31 January 2020 with the objectives to consider what progress had been made in mitigating threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property (according to the World Heritage Convention), including its integrity and authenticity, and what progress has been made to the state of conservation of the property.

**Key Conclusions of the mission are listed on pages 7-8,
Recommendations by the mission are detailed on pages 59-64.**



International Council on
Monuments and Sites
Conseil International
des Monuments et des Sites



Convention on Wetlands
Convention sur les zones humides
Convención sobre los Humedales

**REPORT OF THE JOINT UNESCO/ICOMOS/RAMSAR
ADVISORY MISSION
TO THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY 'VENICE AND ITS LAGOON'
(ITALY)**



27 – 31 January 2020

Preliminary Remark

This report is based on information and knowledge provided at the end of January 2020. It does not consider either the State Party's State of Conservation report for the World Heritage property 'Venice and its Lagoon' (Italy), or the decisions of the Interministerial Committee for the Venice Lagoon (the so-called 'Comitatone') scheduled for March 2020, or any important changes due to the COVID-19 epidemic from which the residents and the economy of the Venice are enormously suffering.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**
- 2. SUMMARY AND KEY CONCLUSIONS**
- 3. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND OF THE MISSION**
- 4. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY**
 - 4.1. Legal Framework,**
 - 4.2. Institutional Framework**
 - 4.3. Management system**
 - 4.4. Management Plan**
The Planned Buffer Zone
- 5. STATE OF CONSERVATION**
 - 5.1. Overall state of conservation of the World Heritage property and its setting (including the future buffer zone)**
The Historic City of Venice
 Conservation Activities
 Management of public spaces
The industrial area of Venice: Port of Marghera
The connections of Venice with the residential areas of the mainland
 - 5.2. Development plans and large infrastructure projects within the property and its setting (including the future buffer zone)**
Management of Urban Planning
Buildings in the setting of the property and the planned buffer zone
GPL storage facility, Chioggia
Expansion of the International Airport Venice, Tessera
Overall comments of development projects
 - 5.3. Large ships entering the Lagoon**
Alternative navigation routes for the large ships
Digging new channels for medium size cruise-ships
 - 5.4. Tourism Management**
Mass Tourism Pressure
Smart Control Room
Tourism infrastructure
 - 5.5. Crowding-out of residents**

5.6. Urban Infrastructure

Waste Collection and Urban Cleaning

Construction of a comprehensive sewer-system

6. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE LAGOON

Environmental and Morphological Plan, Climate Action Plan, Water Plan

The impact of traffic in the Lagoon and 'moto ondoso'

Air pollution

Environmental projects for mitigating negative ecological impacts in the Lagoon

Potential threats for nature in the Lagoon

7. THE 'AQUA GRANDA' OF NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2019

Action Plans for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

Impacts of the event on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property

Experimental Electromechanical Module (MoSE)

Potential threats for nature in relation to the MoSE system

8. RECOMMENDATIONS**ANNEXES**

- 1) Inscription history
- 2) Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (2013)
- 3) World Heritage Committee's decisions
- 4) Terms of Reference
- 5) Composition of Mission Team
- 6) Programme
- 7) Maps and photos

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The members of the mission are highly grateful to the Italian authorities of all state levels for their support, availability, and assistance. Many experts gave presentations of the various projects underway in and around the World Heritage property to help members of the mission understand what has been achieved and what is planned. Their time and enthusiasm for the protection of the heritage of Venice and its Lagoon is much appreciated. Particularly, the Mission would like to convey their gratitude to the members of the Steering Committee for their efforts. A full list of all those who attended sessions of the mission and who made presentations is included in Annex 7.4.

Particular thanks go to Mr Luigi Brugnaro, Mayor of Venice, for meeting the mission team several times, clarifying some of the challenges the city faces and providing information on his personal concerns in dealing with some specific problems of the city. The mission is grateful to the representatives of the Mayor and representatives of all communes around the Lagoon that form the Metropolitan City of Venice for their presentations. Special thanks go to all officials and specialists at the level of the state, the region and the province involved in the preparation and the execution of this mission.

The members of the mission also thank all specialists of the office *Servizio Politiche Internazionali, Cooperazione e UNESCO Ufficio Sito Unesco "Venezia e la sua Laguna"* of the Municipality of Venice, and in particular the Head of the Office, Ms Katia Basili for organizing the mission, compiling a very dense program and for providing valuable information on the current situation of the World Heritage property during the meetings, presentations and site visits. The mission wishes to convey thanks to the permanent participants who gave up much time to accompany them on the various visits, Mr Luca Zuin of the Mayor's cabinet and Mr Marco Mastroianni, director of strategic projects.

Thanks, are also due to the representatives of the NGOs actively involved in protection of the property who came to meet the mission and to express the points of view of their respective organisations. A list of the NGOs who were represented is appended at the end of Annex 7.4.

2. SUMMARY AND KEY CONCLUSIONS

The Mission got a deep insight into the current state of the World Heritage property "Venice and its Lagoon". It realised that in various areas efforts have been made to achieve substantial improvements and reduce existing risks. However, long lasting crucial problems remain unresolved, which pose a significant, cumulative threat to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and its attributes and which will need to be resolved in the very near future.

The Mission considers that the State Party had addressed many of the World Heritage Committee Decisions and recommendations, including the 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission recommendations, nevertheless most of them only partially and not all with a result that could be considered fully satisfactory.

The 'Project of Territorial Governance of Tourism in Venice' has been developed with remarkable intensity and will be operational in a short term. It includes tools to better manage mass tourism but will not lead to the necessary decrease of the visitor's numbers. In this respect, the Mission considers that two fundamental threats have been underestimated so far: these are tourism and related crowding out of residents.

The exuberance of mass tourism, which is a long-standing problem of many decades, has a highly important overall negative impact on the property and its effects are generating complex problems in many fields. This problem already resulted in the significant loss of historical authenticity as well as loss of cultural significance due to the basic change of use of the public and private houses and urban areas. It is to be noted that at this stage it is not sufficient to manage the flow of tourists, but, as the current number of visitors pose a threat to the OUV, the number of tourists must substantially decrease.

The second key factor – allied to the increase in tourism – is the diminution of the local community and the related traditional social and economic structures, which is also a phenomenon that has been identified as a threat for maintaining a balanced urban life long time ago. The local inhabitants of Venice and the Lagoon islands are an essential support for the OUV of the property, the State Party, therefore, should fully recognise that residents are an indispensable part of the city. They should be acknowledged as the essential social structure of the city and supported, not least through the provision of affordable housing, the promotion of employment and securing the related infrastructure, with the aim of increasing their number again.

The question of how cruise ships are managed and how San Marco basin and the Guidecca canal are relieved to a considerable extent is important as well. The State Party considers the banning of large ships (over 40.000 gross ton) from the San Marco basin and the Guidecca channel as a priority. The Mission nevertheless found that although the problem had been identified and the solution has been clarified for some time now, nothing has been decided or realised yet. The Mission confirms that this issue should be handled with priority. Nevertheless, next to finding temporary solutions in order to divert the ships from the heart of Venice as soon as possible, adequate long-term solutions should be found as well, including solutions to ban the largest ships from the Lagoon altogether.

The MoSE flood protection system is about to become technically operational and development of its management system is in progress. However, the Mission was informed that the long-term maintenance task has not yet been assigned to any company. No information was available about long-term monitoring of the effects of operating the MoSE on the ecosystem of the Lagoon.

Documents are in the process of being developed for enhancing the management of the morphological system and ecosystem of the Lagoon. The 'Water Plan for the City of Venice' had been finalised and is in the process to be approved. The 'Environmental and Morphological Plan of the Lagoon' is under development and will include the so called updated "sediment-protocol", which aims to control and manage the dredging of the

navigation routes in the Lagoon and the deposition of the extracted sediment. The 'Climate Action Plan' is also in progress. The State Party aims to align this document with its national strategy related to climate change adaptation. Nonetheless, these important strategic documents were not discussed with the Mission in detail.

The Mission was informed about projects aimed to mitigate the negative changes in the Lagoon ecosystem, which are all positive initiatives. Nevertheless, it considers that the continuing deteriorating effects of human interventions, combined with climate change effects, may rapidly lead to changes in the vulnerable Lagoon ecosystem that may not be reversible without unbearable environmental and societal costs. The mission also noted a failure to deal adequately with development pressures around the Lagoon.

The Mission was presented with the "Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management" that should help to mitigate high tide influence on the property. The main monitoring tool in place is currently the 'tide forecasting and signalling centre'. The State Party is in the course of defining indicators for monitoring climate change related processes within the property. At present, an integrated strategy is not in place for a systematic monitoring of the vulnerability of heritage areas to climate change.

Although the State Party has addressed issues related to the governance and management system of the property, the Mission found that significant progress has not been made for improving the inter-sectoral cooperation between the different stakeholders. If the Mission found that in general the stakeholders are more aware of the values of the property and the threats that endanger it as in 2015, it also realised that the obligation to comply with the complex 'net' of local, regional and national legal regulations hinders effective cooperation and management. The Mission considered that the site management organization (the Municipality of Venice) lacks the power and authorization to coordinate the activities for the management of the property in an efficient way and to implement all the necessary integrated actions for its protection and enhancement. Additionally, the current operation of the Steering Committee fails to empower this body to become a real coordinating entity on an overall strategical level.

The lack of a shared Vision and Strategy for the long-term protection and management of the property by the relevant authorities and stakeholders could be considered one of the greatest threats to its OUV, in terms of how lack of action is allowing threats to attributes to accumulate across the property. Therefore, the cooperative management of the property needs to be enhanced, and the stakeholders need to be part of the development of an overall agreed Vision and Strategy for the protection and preservation of the property that is based on a clear articulation of the attributes of OUV, including its landscape and seascape settings, and the obligations to sustain such attributes.

Such tools could lead to a better understanding of the potential impacts of planned interventions for change (such as restorations, alterations, new constructions, etc.) or of on-going practices (such as those related to tourism, management of the lagoon, new development, etc.) and how these individually and collectively are potentially or actually affecting the OUV of the property. To develop such tools and to ensure their effective uses, the State Party should review the governance of the property especially the mandate of the site management team and the Steering Committee.

The updating process of the Management Plan is also crucial. This is in progress and is foreseen to be completed in 2021. The Mission was informed that the document will incorporate the Road Map that was already developed for identified tasks related to improve the property management. The details of the Road Map were not discussed during the Mission, moreover, as already mentioned above, this Road Map is currently not influenced by a shared vision or strategy of the relevant authorities and stakeholders. Information was also provided that the updating process includes the identification of attributes that convey the OUV of the property and indicators for monitoring. These are all missing elements of the current management system, and their absence is considered a major threat for protecting the OUV.

The State Party is currently revising the buffer zone proposal of the property, taking into consideration the related Committee Decision and the result of the discussion during the Mission. The updated Management Plan must include tasks and measures related to the management of the planned buffer zone and the protection that it offers to the property.

The Mission assessed the provided information in relation to development plans within the property and its setting (within the planned buffer zone). It observed that several projects that have a negative impact on the OUV have been approved or implemented without prior submission to the World Heritage Centre as requested by Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. The Mission also realised that the State Party has not so far made adequate progress for developing processes for identifying development projects or large scale/infrastructure projects that should be subject to this notification process. Environmental Impact Assessments are in many cases part of the national planning process, but Heritage Impact Assessments are not included in these practices. An integrated process has not been developed by the State Party for handling these projects and defining clear policies for urban planning and development (including a skyline policy for the setting of the property). And all this also relates to the need for a clear Vision and Strategy for the property.

In conclusion, the Mission considered that the velocity of progress for long standing problems is too slow and too limited with key issues being neglected. Despite some progress, threats, and their impacts on attributes of OUV continue to accumulate, which is a great cause for concern and a threat to the property.

What is urgently needed is a much stronger framework for dealing with the multiple and disparate issues that are leading to negative impacts. The mission considers that it is crucial that a shared Vision and overall Strategy must be developed based on a clear articulation of the attributes of OUV, and underpinned by stronger governance mechanisms, a revised management plan, and a buffer zone, all of which should form the basis for an updated Road Map and Action Plan. The mission considers that these tools remain vital. In their absence, and in the light of accumulating threats, the property is under threat.

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF THE MISSION (the detailed recommendations of the Mission are included in the report and are listed in chapter 8.):

- ***Develop a shared Vision and Strategy for protecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property based on a clear articulation of the attributes of OUV, including landscape and seascape settings, with the involvement of all stakeholders;***
- ***To deliver such a Vision and Strategy, revise the governance of the property, especially the designation and mandate of the responsible site management;***
- ***Revise the Management Plan based on a systematic assessment of OUV and others values, and ensure that the document serves as an integrated plan for the whole property and its planned buffer zone, and that it is accompanied by Action Plan(s) related to the identification and mitigation of major threats to the property and its OUV and a detailed updated Road Map;***
- ***In order to help maintain the integrity and authenticity of the property, and protect its OUV and attributes, halt any construction overtopping the average maximum height of the existing townscape until an Integrated Master Plan for within the property and its future buffer zone is developed with a clear concept in relation to a Tall Building/Skyline Policy with maximum heights;***

- ***Ensure that the monitoring of the property is part of the management system and develop an integrated strategy for monitoring the impacts of Climate Change on the OUV and attributes of the property;***

- ***The above documents and structures should collectively address the following:***
 - ***Develop adequate measures to substantially reduce the number of tourists, being aware that otherwise the authenticity and integrity of the property is considerably compromised, and its OUV threatened,***
 - ***Ensure that efficient measures are developed and implemented in order to increase the number of residents in Venice and on the islands, in awareness that otherwise the authenticity and integrity of the property is thoroughly compromised, and the OUV and the attributes of the property are threatened,***
 - ***Search for solutions to ban the large cruise ships from the Lagoon altogether,***
 - ***Finalise constructing the system of artificial flood gates (MoSE), which will prevent the extreme high tides from damaging Venice and the other islands in the Lagoon, but also ensure that the full operationalisation of the system is followed by constant monitoring and developing proper mitigation measures for any negative impacts,***
 - ***Ensure that the ecosystems and the biodiversity of the Lagoon is regularly monitored, and negative impacts are avoided or mitigated in a strategic and efficient way. Additionally, finalise the development of the strategic documents (the sediment-protocols, the water plans, the Morphological Plan and the Climate Action Plan of the Lagoon) and implement actions related to the safeguarding of the natural values of the Lagoon semi-lacustral habitat,***
 - ***Ensure that all changes and development projects in the property, its planned buffer zone and in its setting are monitored in a strategic way and that mechanisms are put in place for assessing their impact on the OUV and attributes of the property (Environmental Impact Assessments, Heritage Impact Assessments, and/or Strategic Environmental Assessments), and notifying them to the World Heritage Centre in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.***

3. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND OF THE MISSION

The World Heritage Committee is following the state of conservation of the property 'Venice and its Lagoon' in the framework of the Reactive Monitoring process since 2014. Upon the request of the Committee, a UNESCO/ICOMOS/Ramsar Reactive Monitoring mission took place in October 2015. Several threats and factors affecting the property were identified, among them impacts of tourism (including damage to building fabric and cultural context, through conversion of residences for tourist accommodation or commercial use), proposals for large infrastructure, navigation and construction projects, inadequate planning tools, management and governance, potential negative environmental impacts (triggered by motor boats, cruise ships and oil tankers), climate change and severe weather events (impacts on the Lagoon ecology and built fabric). Both in 2016 and 2017 the Committee in Decisions **40 COM 7B.52** and **41 COM 7B.48** considered the inscription of the property on the List of the World Heritage in Danger in case adequate and substantial progress in the implementation of its previous recommendations and that of the report of the 2015 mission is not accomplished.

At its last session (43rd session, Baku, Azerbaijan, 2019) in Decision **43 COM 7B.86**, the Committee had put forward several requests in relation to long standing issues and a need for the State Party to provide further or updated information in relation to these. The Committee concluded its decision by requesting an overall updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the issues raised in the decision by 1 February 2020, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session in 2020, **with a view to considering the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger in line with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines, if the implemented mitigation measures and the adapted management system does not result in significant and measurable progress in the state of conservation of the property.**

On 2 October 2019, a meeting was held between UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the representatives of the State Party, in order to discuss the most recurrent issues related to the property, as a follow up to World Heritage Committee decisions and the measures suggested by the 2015 Reactive Monitoring Mission. The invitation of a joint technical Advisory mission (WHC/ICOMOS/Ramsar) by the State Party was agreed during this meeting.

The Advisory mission was invited by the State Party on 11 November 2019 and was carried out from 27 to 31 January 2020. The objective of the mission was to consider

- a. what progress has been made in mitigating threats to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, including its integrity and authenticity, and
- b. what achievements and significant measurable progress has been made to the state of conservation of the property, as requested by the World Heritage Committee in Decision 43 COM 7B.86, resulting from implementation of mitigation measures and of improvements to the adapted management system of the property.

The Terms of Reference for the Advisory mission required review and assessment of the following key issues:

Mitigation measures

- c. Consider progress with the overall plan, the different alternative options, detailed timeframe and progress with measures to prohibit large ships to enter the Lagoon or the option to allow large ships to reach the Venice Maritime station without passing through the San Marco Basin and the Giudecca Canal, also as part of the framework of the 'Pact for the Development of the City of Venice';
- d. Consider progress in the implementation of the 'Project of Territorial Governance of Tourism in Venice', including its achievements for measurable outcomes and the level of mitigating the negative impacts of tourism pressure; additionally, reviewing its

effectiveness to achieve the objectives of the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme and the 'Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective in the World Heritage Convention';

- e. Consider progress with the preparation and finalisation of the 'Environmental and Morphological Plan for the Lagoon of Venice' and the 'Climate Action Plan' and the planned timeline for their submission for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, as well as the planned implementation process of the 'Water Plan for the City of Venice'.

Adaptive Management System

- f. Review the governance and management system of the property, including the effectiveness of the intersectional cooperation between the different stakeholders responsible for the management of the property;
- g. Consider progress with updating the Management Plan, including how it will incorporate the existing, detailed road map for the management of the property and its measurable benchmarks and be extended to cover the potential buffer zone of the property;
- h. Consider progress with strengthening the monitoring system for vulnerability of heritage areas in relation to climate change and disaster risk;
- i. Clarify the role and content of the proposed outlined preliminary analysis for development plans and large-scale/infrastructure projects within the property and surrounding areas and how these will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines; additionally, the role and importance of Heritage Impact Assessments and/or Strategic Environmental Assessments addressing also potential cumulative impacts on the OUV of the property;
- j. Consider progress with measures to improve communication with the World Heritage Centre.

The high tide events that hit Venice at the end of 2019

- k. reviewing existing policies and guidelines addressing disaster risk reduction, disaster risk management, emergency preparedness and response and post disaster assessment and reconstruction, and how these policies and guidelines are included in the management system of the World Heritage property;
- l. reviewing the already assessed impacts of the last high-water levels on the OUV and attributes of the property;
- m. reviewing the progress for the completion of the MOSE defence system, and its planned management and maintenance system in the long term, additionally its potential to fulfil the objective of avoiding negative impacts of temporary flooding and rising sea level.¹

¹ The complete Terms of Reference, the composition of the Mission team and programme are provided in Annexes 4-6.

4. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

4.1. Legal Framework

The responsibility for compliance with the obligations arising from the World Heritage Convention rests with the State Party.² Accordingly, the Italian Constitution³ gives the State the central authority to enforce the measures necessary to safeguard the World Heritage property, which refers to all stakeholders: all sectors of administration, civil associations and individuals.

A special law for safeguarding Venice and its Lagoon⁴ was issued in 1973 after the dramatic flood of 1966, which forms the basis of intervention measures and subsidies that compensate the special conditions of the city and its setting. This regulation was followed by other regulatory measures (in particular Act 798/1984, Act 360/1991 and Act 139/1992) which, as a whole, define the strategic objectives, the procedures for achieving them and the competences of the various institutional actors involved.

In Italy, a specific law exists for providing measures related to the protection and management of the Italian World Heritage properties⁵. Cultural heritage (including cultural properties) and cultural landscapes in general are protected by the national Legislative Decree n. 42 of 22 January 2004 (Codex of Cultural heritage and landscape). On the local and regional level the spatial planning system, which is backed up by several legal regulations⁶ provides an overall framework for regulating changes and new developments.

In 2015, the 'Metropolitan City of Venice' was established as a governing municipal level, which encompasses the territory of 44 municipalities, among which 8 are part of the World Heritage property (Chioggia, Campagna Lupia, Mira, Venezia, Quarto d'Altino, Musile di Piave, Cavallino Treporti, Jesolo). The municipality of Codevigo, which is also part of the property, belongs to the Province of Padua. The Metropolitan City of Venice prepared and approved a Strategic Metropolitan Plan (SMP) in 2018⁷ for a three-year period, which represents an official guidance for the metropolitan city institutions and for the municipalities under its scope. The SMP includes development targets, but it is not an urban plan. Urban Municipality Plans are foreseen to be aligned with SPM, which are under preparation currently, and should be approved by the Metropolitan City of Venice. An overall Metropolitan Territorial Plan is also under preparation by the Metropolitan City.

In relation to urban planning and quality architecture, the Mission was also informed that a Commission for Quality and Architectural Beauty has been established at the regional level, with the aim to collect data, prepare studies and make proposals aimed at promoting quality in architectural, urban and landscape design. (See the chapter on "Management of Urban Planning")

² Signature on 23 June 1978.

³ Constitution of the Italian Republic, in particular Articles 9, 114, 117, 118, 119.

⁴ Law No. 171 of 16 April 1973, <http://sistemavenezia.regione.veneto.it/content/legge-speciale-venezia>

⁵ Law No.77 of 20 February 2006 on "Special measures for the protection and use of Italian sites of cultural, landscape and environmental interest, included in the List of World Heritage Sites, placed under the protection of UNESCO"

⁶ E.g.: Regional Urban Law No.11 of 23 April 2004; Regional Law No. 14 of 6 June 2017 on "Provisions for the containment of soil consumption"; Regional Law No. 14 of 4 April 2019 on "Veneto 2050, policies for urban redevelopment and re-naturalization of the territory".

⁷ The Plan is based on Law No. 56 of 2014 on "Rules on metropolitan cities, provinces, and municipalities".

As already stated in the 2015 Reactive Monitoring Mission report the entire Lagoon is recognized as a 'Nature 2000' site by the European Union⁸. Additionally, the nature reserve ('Valle Averte' (500 ha) in the municipality of Campagna Lupia was designated in 1989 as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The overall environmental protection framework for the Venice Lagoon and the region is provided by legislative Decree No. 152 of 3 April 2006⁹. In relation to the natural environment of the Lagoon (e.g. the ecosystem, the natural habitats, saltmarshes (*barene*) and fish farm ponds (*valli*) of the Lagoon, ministerial decrees of 1969 and 1985¹⁰ provide protection for areas located in the municipalities of Venice, Jesolo, Musile di Piave, Quarto D'Altino, Mira, Campagna Lupia, Chioggia and Codevigo. This protection is to be extended to the territory of Cavallino Treporti, separated from the Municipality of Venice since 1999.

The protection and management of water sources of the property and its setting is based on the 'Eastern Alps River Basin Management Plan (2000/60/CE) and subordinate plans exists for the environmental protection of the Veneto Region and the Venice Lagoon. The management of the ports in the Lagoon are based on Law No. 84 of 28 January 1994. According to this regulation, the port system of Venice should have a Port Strategic Planning Document, which defines strategic objectives and provides planned strategic measurements for the entire Port System of Venice, for issues connected with the port activities (this document has already been developed). Additionally, each individual port in the Lagoon area should prepare a Port Master Plan (these are in progress). There is also a special Master Plan of the industrial harbour of Marghera for the contaminated sites remediation.

The regulation of the large ships above 40.000 gross ton in the Venice Lagoon is based on Ordinances No 23/2012 of 21 March 2012 and No 105/2013 of 31 July 2013. After these regulations came into force, the Venetian Harbour Master Office carried out an Environmental Assessment for the impact of large cruise ships in the Lagoon, and a revised regulation was put in place by Ordinance No 17/2018 of 9 April 2018, which conceptually transformed the gross tonnage of ships by putting in place a more complex technical-dimensional value definition. Further regulation for large ships entering the Lagoon was introduced by Ordinance No 66/2019, as a result of the accident of the MSC Opera on 2 June 2019 within the Giudecca channel. In the understanding of the Mission, the existing regulation would sustain the banning of ships over 40.000 gross ton from the San Marco – Giudecca channel, in case adequate alternative navigation route would be found for these ships to dock in Venice. Nevertheless, the current regulations do not oblige the banning of these ships from the Venice Lagoon itself.

The Mission was informed on several occasions during its visit that apart from the legal regulations issued specially for Venice, the national, regional and local authorities responsible for the management of the property should comply with the legislations valid for the overall territory of the Italian Republic. It was clear from the presentations and discussions that the authorities are facing difficulties complying with these regulations and adapting them to the special conditions of the property. The Mission also notified that as several levels of the state hierarchy (with the related

⁸ The entire Lagoon is a Special Protection Area according to the European Birds Directive, and the northern and southern parts of the Lagoon (excluding a small area around Venice-Mestre) are Sites of Community Interest according to the European Habitats Directive.

⁹ <https://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/deleghe/06152dl.htm>

¹⁰ Ministerial Decree of 1 August 1985 on the "Declaration of considerable public interest concerning the Ecosystem of the Venetian Lagoon located in the territory of the municipalities of Venice, Jesolo, Musile di Piave, Quarto D'Altino, Mira, Campagna Lupia, Chioggia and Codevigo". This decree is interconnected with the Ministerial Decree of 13 July 1969.

regulatory obligations) are involved in the management of the property (local, supra local, regional, governmental level), which generates difficulties with operationalising an adequate management system and provides a situation that could be considered as excessive governance.

The Mission considers that a general remark and clarification of various terms is necessary in relation to some aspects of the legal regulatory framework and as an introduction to the management system and Management Plan sections of this report. In Decision **41 COM 7B.48**, the World Heritage Committee requested a detailed Road Map for the way forward, with measurable benchmarks and a detailed Action Plan to deliver what is needed, commensurate with the major threats to the property. In Decision **43 COM 7B.86**, it requested to incorporate the detailed road map and its measurable benchmarks within the updated Management Plan, additionally to supplement the document with a planned management strategy for the potential buffer zone of the property, and to submit the draft updated Management Plan for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, prior to its finalization and adoption (Decision 43 COM 7B.86 – 8).

The Road Map is meant to summarise and define the goals and desired outcomes set out in an overall vision for the protection and preservation of the property and its planned buffer zone, setting the major steps and milestones for short-, medium- and long-term actions. The Action Plan should define the key stages to realising that vision in order to provide a framework for how development should be regulated in the property and its setting. Currently, the Management Plan is in revision and with it the already developed Road Map. Nevertheless, the Mission considers that a shared vision which must form the basis of the requested Road Map and the Action Plan by relevant actors and stakeholders is still missing.

However, in the meantime several Master Plans for different concerns have been elaborated by the State Party. As far as the Mission can ascertain, none of them have been submitted to the World Heritage Centre, and it is important to clearly distinguish between the requested Road Map and Action Plan on one side, related to the identification and mitigation of major threats to the property and its OUV and, on the other side, Master Plans defining and regulating specific issues.

Recommendation 1

Recognise the specificities of the property and systematically revise the national and regional regulations in order to provide possibility for exemption from all relevant ones accordingly. Provide room for the regional and local authorities to prepare specific legal tools or adjust the national and regional regulations to the need of the property, to provide bases for its suitable management.

Recommendation 2

Develop a shared vision for protecting the OUV of the property and ensure its transmission to future generations, furthermore, update and align the existing Road Map with this shared vision and develop an appropriate Action Plan (or Actions Plans if appropriate), related to the identification and mitigation of major threats to the property and its OUV as requested by the World Heritage Committee, and submit these in a draft form before final approval to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. Continue developing Master Plans defining and regulating specific issues for enhancing the protection of the OUV of the property.

4.2. Institutional Framework

The Special Law for Venice formed bases for the establishment of an Interministerial Committee for Safeguarding Venice (*Comitatone*, meaning a large and important committee). This Committee is presently composed by:

the President of the Council of Ministers, who chairs it,
 the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport
 the Ministry of the Environment and of the Protection of the Territory and the Sea
 the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Cultural Activities and Tourism
 the Ministry of Education, University and Research
 the Ministry of Economy and Finance
 the President of the Veneto Region
 the Mayor of Venice
 the Mayor of Chioggia
 the Mayor of Cavallino Treporti
 the Mayor of Mira (delegated by the municipalities of Codevigo and Campagna Lupia)
 the Mayor of Jesolo (delegated by the municipalities of Jesolo, Musile di Piave and Quarto d'Altino)

The President of the Public Works Authority (*Provveditorato delle opere pubbliche*)¹¹ ensures the secretarial function of the Committee. The *Comitatone* is responsible for supervising the implementation, coordination, and control of the Special Law for Venice. It supervises and monitors the use of the financial resources allocated by this Law and suggests changes if needed for its distribution. It also reports to the Italian Parliament about the implementation of the projects and the use of the allocated budget. The strategic decisions related to Venice and its Lagoon are also taken by the *Comitatone*.

Following the entry into force of the special regulation for the protection and management of World Heritage properties in Italy (Law No.77 of 20 February 2006), a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by the responsible authorities for 'Venice and its Lagoon' in 2007. The MoU identified the City of Venice as site manager for the property, and the authorities in charge at different levels for the protection and management have been indicated as 'responsible bodies'. To implement the World Heritage Convention on the site level and provide a platform for cooperation between the responsible bodies, a Steering Committee was also created (*Comitato di Pilotaggio*). The responsible authorities delegate one representative to the Steering Committee on the political and technical level, and the work of this body is governed primarily by the relevant national, regional, and local legislative tools. The Steering Committee meets regularly, several times in a year.

The following 20 authorities delegate representatives to the Steering Committee, which is chaired by the City of Venice:

Authority	Institutional Competences
Municipality of Campagna Lupia Municipality of Cavallino-Treporti Municipality of Chioggia Municipality of Codevigo Municipality of Jesolo Municipality of Mira Municipality of Musile di Piave Municipality of Quarto d'Altino	The area of the World Heritage property is covered by 9 different municipalities, belonging to two regions (provinces). Their scope of duty lies mainly in spatial planning and economic development. The municipalities are in charge of the government of the territory, emergency plans, acquisitions, restoration and conservation of residential buildings or buildings that have social, cultural, productive, handcraft and commercial functions, and key to maintain the social-economic characteristics of Venice and of the urban settlements in the Lagoon. Economic programming, construction of urban works, ordinary maintenance,

¹¹ Formerly *Magistrato alle Acque* (water magistrate), which is now the Interregional Authority for Public Works of Veneto, Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli- Venezia Giulia.

Municipality of Venice	landscape and environmental protection and awareness raising about heritage protection is also their responsibility.
Veneto Region	Programming and coordinating activities concerning economy, territory, environment, tourism, transports, sustainable mobility and navigation, culture, residential housing, employment, territorial and landscape planning. Procedures for assessing projects and plans on a regional level.
Metropolitan City of Venice ¹² Province of Padua	Protection and management of the territory, programming and management of the provincial road system, hunting and fishing management, environmental and land defence policies, enhancement and promotion of tourism, agricultural and economic development, promotion of culture, sports, mobility and local transport.
<i>Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Activities (MiBACT) through its regional authorities:</i>	
MiBACT Regional Secretariat of Veneto	Coordination, management, and control of the activities performed by the regional structures of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism (Like the Superintendences, State Archive).
Superintendence for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the City of Venice and its Lagoon	<p>Preservation and protection of cultural heritage by controlling building construction activities and territorial developments.</p> <p>It evaluates applications for changes (restoration, external refurbishment of protected buildings, changes on landscape level, etc.) safeguards cultural values and channels cultural interest in the licensing procedure by issuing statements and formal opinions.</p> <p>It manages state-owned cultural properties that are owned by the Government and are in the use of local authorities.</p> <p>It authorizes projects related to cultural heritage properties, loans for exhibitions, advertising posters and banners, etc.</p> <p>It protects and enhances archaeological heritage (movable and immovable, on land and submerged) by controlling public and private projects' activities; additionally, it manages national archaeological museums and archaeological sites.</p>
Archival and Bibliographic Superintendence of Veneto and Trentino-Alto Adige	Preservation, protection and enhancement of the public and private archives and libraries in Veneto and Trentino-Alto Adige, considered to be of cultural interest. It also supports scientific projects and studies, promotes publications and cultural events.
Museum Pole of Veneto	Protection and enhancement of movable historic-artistic heritage owned by public bodies (state-owned or local), the Church, NGOs etc. in the territory of Venice.
State Archive of Venice	Conservation, protection, promotion, and enhancement of movable heritage held in the Archive.
<i>Diocese of Venice</i>	Protection and enhancement of cultural heritage owned or managed by the Church.

¹² Replacing the former Province of Venice

<i>Ministry of Infrastructure Works</i> through its peripheral authorities:	
Interregional Authority for Public Works and Infrastructure of Veneto, Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli-Venezia Giulia	Water management of Venice and its Lagoon (excluding the navigation channels for large ships, but including low seabed, tidal flats and shoals, lagoon channels), and protection from erosion, high tides and heavy storms. Authorization of waterways traffic, dumping in the Lagoon, control of oil tankers navigation in the Lagoon, setting up properly equipped offshore terminals.
North Adriatic Sea Port Authority - Ports of Venice and Chioggia	Management of State-owned maritime properties and control of navigation channels for large ships for the maritime areas of Venice and the Lagoon. Enhancing port areas in agreement with the Municipalities of Venice and Chioggia.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Activities (MiBACT) acts as National Focal Point for World Heritage, and the major responsibility for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention lies with the UNESCO Office within MiBACT.

The daily management of the property and its setting is carried out by the authorities represented in the Steering Committee in a rather individual manner, all of them focusing on their specific areas and their own competencies. The relevant authorities may have a higher-level awareness both about the values of the property and the importance of adequate management than in 2015. Efforts are clearly put forward for a better cooperation as well. Nevertheless, due to the strong binding legal system, an excess of governance could be observed in relation to the site management. It was also noted by the Mission that the Steering Committee could not fully live up to its name, as it does not have a power for decision-making in individual cases or issues, furthermore to manage the general course of operations or develop policies and strategies that relate to the most pressing issues and challenges of the property management, as it primarily functions as a platform for exchanging information and a forum for discussion.

The designated site manager within the municipal administration of Venice, is the World Heritage Site Management Office, which is part of the Strategic and Environmental Project Directorate. The Site Management Office is supposed to coordinate the activities for the management of the property and the implementation of activities for its protection and enhancement. Nonetheless, it was noted that this Office lacks the power and authorisation to carry out this work in an efficient way in cooperation with the Steering Committee, as the decision-making power lies with individual authorities (among them the Major of the municipality of Venice/Metropolitan City of Venice and the decision making authorities within the municipality), and the flexibility for a proactive approach is hindered by the net of legal regulations that the authorities should comply with.

Recommendation 3

Revise the governance of the property, especially the designation and mandate of the responsible site management, to enable more autonomous and empowered decision making and actions.

Recommendation 4

Reconsider the role of the Steering Committee, as this platform should act in a more proactive and cross cutting manner, developing overall visions, strategies and policies for the property, which then could be transmitted and discussed with the Interministerial Committee that has the power to designate projects and allocate financial sources for their implementation.

4.3. Management system

As described in chapter 5.2., the designated site manager for the property is the City of Venice, which undertakes this task through its dedicated unit, the World Heritage Site Management Office within the municipal administration. The site management is cooperating with the authorities in charge at different levels for the protection and management of the property, through the operation of the Steering Committee that has been set up to provide a platform for all responsible bodies in the site management.

As the property covers the area of nine individual municipalities, and responsibilities of governance within the property and its setting are divided between local, regional, and national authorities the site management is facing difficult challenges. The idea of the Steering Committee as a common platform could still be considered useful, nevertheless, most of the identified issues and challenges by the 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission are still valid presently.

Notably:

- "The involved bodies are independent, and the work of the Steering Committee has no real influence on an effective coordination in view of a preservation of the World Heritage property."
- "The meetings of the Committee are limited to an exchange of information and point of view without any mandatory results."
- "The Mission noted that the Steering Committee has a weak position with only a recommending and no decisive competence."
- "The Mission noted the absence of established procedures for coordination and decision-making between the 21 bodies involved in the management of the property."
- "...the Mission noted the absence of an operational procedure to evaluate and assess sectorial needs and priorities..."
- "...no procedures exist to follow-up issues raised by CSOs and NGOs that go beyond issues addressed by the 9 local authorities (*municipi*) concerned."
- "...the Mission noted the lack of a shared vision for Venice among the many different stakeholders at national, regional and local levels."

This Mission noted that while all stakeholders seem to be aware of the values of the property, the different interests of the local, regional and national level, both on the economic, social and political level are creating conflicts between the different stakeholders, and there are no independent managing body that could effectively mediate these conflicts and could work for a shared vision and a strategy that focuses primarily on the protection of the OUV and its transmission to future generations.

The World Heritage property 'Venice and its Lagoon' is inscribed on the World Heritage List under all six cultural criteria, which means a huge responsibility for the site management, as these criteria cover a complex system of values: tangible and intangible, cultural, natural, social, economic, movable and immovable, etc. These values should be recognised and shared by all stakeholders in order to be able to protect and manage them. The adequate management, therefore, requires a much closer cooperation of responsible authorities. Furthermore, an inclusive and participatory approach for non-governmental stakeholders is needed.

The present management system involves responsible authorities that are carrying out individually important works and task for value protection and preservation (restoring and refurbishing historic buildings, maintaining the traditional and modern infrastructure of the islands, mitigating negative impacts of degradation within the Lagoon ecosystem, etc.), nevertheless, these projects do not seem to be interconnected with an overall strategy that would also allow place for prioritization and would ensure that no important tasks are overlooked.

The responsible authorities are also facing problems due to the “excess of governance”, as complying with the complex system of legal regulation restricts in many cases the possibility to implement adequate management tools tailored to the needs of the property and the protection of its OUV.¹³

The Mission also noted that while tourism is the major economic income producer in the property and its setting, and that the problems with mass tourism are affecting the lives of the residents on a daily basis, the approach to consider an inclusive approach towards tourists, as stakeholders in the site management, primarily through effective awareness raising and targeted programs, has a low efficiency at the moment.¹⁴

Recommendation 5

Ensure that the protection of the OUV of the property is harmonised on the local, supralocal, regional and national level. Provide a platform for discussing and mediating conflicts in an effective and result-based way.

Recommendation 6

Establish a participatory governance approach for the management of the property and in the main decision-making processes that have a strategic importance. Involve residents, civil associations, and through awareness raising tools visitors as well in the site management.

Recommendation 7

Provide means to the site management body in order to enhance the level of its involvement with all the stakeholders, including residents and civil associations, and enable the overall coordination power over the protection and management of the property, as well as its monitoring.

Recommendation 8

Develop adequate procedures for coordination and decision-making between the bodies involved in the management of the property and evaluate and assess sectorial needs and priorities.

4.4. Management Plan

The Mission noted that the present Management Plan (MP) of the property is outdated (it was valid between 2012 and 2018), and it regrets that apparently, a seamless transition to the new plan has not been planned and achieved. Currently, the State Party is working on updating and revising the document, which is planned to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre in 2022. The first draft of the MP might be ready for discussion by the end of 2020.

The outdated document was the result of a joint effort by responsible bodies and its preparation seemed to be a valuable exercise for understanding the challenges and needs related to the management of the property. Nevertheless, as the 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission noted “...the MP does not appear yet a practical instrument for management.” and that it was “not readjusted in response to the comments of ICOMOS” (provided through a Technical Review in 2014).

¹³ A typical example that sheds light to this problem is the regulation of the maximum speed in the small canals within Venice. The municipality has all necessary technical equipment to measure the infractions. However, as the national legislation recognises infraction and fines only for vehicles on land and not for those on water, currently it is not possible to penalise infringements.

¹⁴ The mission recommends the site management to show the visitors through exhibitions and communication tools the specificities, challenges and hardships related to the daily management of the property (like waste management, cleaning of the streets, refurbishment or construction of buildings and public infrastructure, park maintenance, transportation of goods, public services for health care and fire protection, etc.).

This mission also considers that an important missing element of the outdated MP was a systematic identification and mapping of attributes. The assessment of values, the understanding of the OUV and the identification of attributes that convey the OUV are essential elements of any World Heritage management system. Without these, there could be no appropriate strategies and policies for protection and management developed. Another important missing element of the outdated MP was the absence of monitoring indicators and monitoring process, which is essential to follow up the effectiveness of the management system and the possibility for its proper adjustment. Focus should also be put on developing and implementing mitigation measures to reduce risks to the OUV of the property.

The site management body provided information to the Mission on the working methodology that they are following in the updating process. According to this, the work had been started by taking into stock the criteria, and the description of authenticity and integrity. With the foreseen addition of the planned buffer zone to the property, the extension and review of stakeholder mapping is ongoing as well.

The site management body seems to be aware that a World Heritage management plan is supposed to be an integrated plan that sets priorities and guides decision-making and plans to develop it through a consultative process with stakeholders. Nevertheless, the mission considers, as noted already, that a shared vision for the protection and management of the property which affords priority to sustaining its OUV and its landscape and seascape setting by the authorities and the stakeholders, and which could form the basis of the updated Management Plan is still missing. The updated document will incorporate an updated version of the Road Map that was already developed by the State Party (submitted to the World Heritage Centre with the State Party's state of conservation report for preparation of the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee) and short, medium- and long-term action plans (including timelines, 'owners' of tasks, inter-sectorial cooperation and ways of implementation). Nonetheless, these should be based on strategies that follow a shared vision as well, which is still to be developed by the State Party as a matter of urgency.

The Planned Buffer Zone

Although the Mission was not requested to monitor the planned buffer zone and to give advice on it, in order to give an overview of the property, the following observations might be helpful to fully understand the issues in this report.

The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987 without a buffer zone. In 2014, in response to the request of the World Heritage Centre, the State Party put forward a proposal for the creation of a buffer zone in the frame of the MP. For this proposal the State Party was advised to review the tentative area's perimeter and submit the revised version to the World Heritage Centre as a minor boundary modification by 1 February 2015 (**Decision 38 COM 7B.27**, Doha, Qatar, 2014).

In the 2014 ICOMOS Technical Review, the planned buffer zone was advised to be grounded on an overall interdisciplinary study that gives particular relevance to the hydrological and hydro-geomorphological factors and clarifies which areas, features and processes are functionally linked to the inscribed property and should therefore be taken into consideration to guarantee that the attributes of its OUV are protected and conserved.

In the State Party's state of conservation report of 2015, the buffer zone proposal was further developed. The World Heritage Committee noted the revised proposal in its subsequent decision (**Decision 40 COM 7B.52**, Istanbul, Turkey; UNESCO's Headquarters, 2016) and then reiterated its requests for a formal submission of the buffer zone proposal as a minor boundary modification in the following year (**Decision**

41 COM 7B.48, Krakow, Poland, 2017). For the 43 World Heritage Committee session, the State Party had complied with the request and submitted a minor boundary modification for the creation of a 511,028.21-ha buffer zone for the property.

The proposal was evaluated by ICOMOS prior to the World Heritage Committee session. ICOMOS noted that "...there are four existing water bodies in the coastal strip although only three of them are included within the proposed buffer zone." Therefore, it advised for the World Heritage Committee to invite the State Party for providing rationale for the exclusion of this water body and reconsider the exclusion of a part of the southern coastal strip from the proposed buffer zone. It considered that "...the rationale for the delineation of the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone is consistent with the objective of ensuring a uniform management perspective..." It also concluded that "...the State Party is invited to sign a Programme Agreement in order to officially establish this coordinated management" for the property.

In **Decision 43 COM 8B.46** (Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, 2019) the World Heritage Committee Referred back the proposal for the State Party, in order to comply with the above described evaluation conclusions.

The revision of the planned buffer zone is also in progress, the Mission was informed that the State Party initially did not consider the addition of the missing water body because that is based on the Po river water basin and not on the Venice Lagoon water basin (water body EC1_4). However, after a discussion during the Mission, it has been agreed that all water bodies of the coastal strip will be included within the buffer zone. The future buffer zone should include the immediate setting of the property, with consideration to the protection and preservation of the OUV. (Landscape, visual, ecological, hydrological, coastal marine, economic and social aspects, etc. should all be considered in relation to how the area supports the property.)¹⁵

The site management body is also conducting an exercise within the framework of the MP update to map projects that could potentially impact on the OUV of the property and are to be notified to the World Heritage Centre. They also consider that the updated MP will be a tool for monitoring infrastructure projects.

The Mission considers that the Management Plan should be a living document that serves as a platform for the different stakeholders and a framework for an integrated strategy related to the site management.

Recommendation 9

Ensure that the updated Management Plan becomes a living document, which is based on a shared vision by authorities and stakeholders and is developed in a transparent and inclusive way and available for all stakeholders, including residents, associations and non-governmental organisations. Ensure that the document serves as an integrated plan for the whole property and its planned buffer zone, which guides all responsible bodies and stakeholders, and provides them with detailed Road Map and indicators for measurable benchmarks in order to protect the OUV of the property.

Recommendation 10

Ensure that the updated Management Plan is based on a systematic value assessment (including the identification and mapping of attributes that convey the OUV of the property) and accompanied by short- and medium-term Action Plans, including roadmaps and its measurable benchmarks.

Recommendation 11

¹⁵ "For the purposes of effective protection of the nominated property, a buffer zone is an area surrounding the nominated property, which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development in order to give an added layer of protection to the property." Operational Guidelines, Paragraph 104.

Ensure that the monitoring of the property is part of the management system and the Management Plan. The key indicators should be identified to measure and assess the state of conservation of the property, the factors affecting it, conservation measures at the property, the periodicity of their examination, and the identity of the responsible authorities.

Recommendation 12

Develop a specific monitoring system for vulnerability of heritage areas to Climate Change and strengthen the existing monitoring for disaster risk. Ensure that the updated Management Plan includes an integrated approach for disaster, Climate Change, and other risk preparedness, as well as training strategies for the responsible bodies and stakeholders.

Recommendation 13

Revise the overall management system of the property in the process of updating the Management Plan, in order to ensure that a sustainable development approach is followed, and the coordinated management of the proposed buffer zone is integrated into the management system.

Recommendation 14

Ensure that the delineation of the planned buffer zone is not limited by administrative zoning or sectorial territorial designations but be based on the assessment of values related to the OUV of the property.

Recommendation 15

Develop an assessment process that would allow the site management body and the relevant authorities to comply with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. Notify planned changes (major restoration or new construction projects) which may affect the OUV of the property to the World Heritage Committee through the World Heritage Centre as soon as possible and before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse.

Recommendation 16

Develop adequate processes that will allow the relevant authorities to fully comply with Paragraph 118bis. of the Operational Guidelines, which request for States Parties to ensure that Environmental Impact Assessments, Heritage Impact Assessments, and/or Strategic Environmental Assessments be carried out as a pre-requisite for development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the World Heritage property.

5. STATE OF CONSERVATION

5.1. Overall state of conservation of the World Heritage property and its setting (including the future buffer zone)

The Historic City of Venice

Conservation Activities

In 1973 the Italian Parliament passed the so-called 'Special Law for Venice'. Article 1(1) of the Law reads: "The safety of Venice and of its Lagoon is declared a problem of the highest national interest." Among other contents, the law allocated money for public works and for Venice residents. With the law, the Republic took the responsibility to maintain the landscaped area, historical significance, and archaeological and artistic environment in a good state of conservation, to protect the hydrologic equilibration, to reduce pollution of water and air and to ensure socioeconomic vitality.

To transpose the part of these intentions that regard the municipality (and apart from subsidies to the province and the region), the municipality of Venice receives financial help from the State for restoration work of all kinds, including the conservative restoration of buildings. Substantial help must also be accorded to private owners.

The special law recognises that running a city located on islands is much more expensive than that to a city on the land. Also, any work of maintenance is more difficult and transportation of material of any kind is much more complicated. Thus, the subsidies should compensate for the additional costs arising from the special location (urban infrastructure, urban transport, foundations, salt pollution, etc.). First and foremost, the financial help is to be used for the continuous maintenance of the historical city and of the private owned real estate. Furthermore, several works of infrastructure must be realised.¹⁶ Other projects concern the elevation of certain open spaces: The level of pedestrian areas towards the waterfront is raised some decimetres in order to avoid flooding. Such measures may lead to difficult and poor situations in the relationship with existing buildings.¹⁷ For years, the subsidies based on the law have substantially helped to enhance the situation in the entire Lagoon, especially in the fields of reduction of pollution of water and air and the work of MoSE, in an effort to stabilise the hydrologic situation.

The financial help to Venice from the Italian State based on the Special law for Venice reached a maximum of € 258 million in 1997; it diminished continually, and it was zero for several years; in 2018 the aid amounted to € 18 million, in 2019 to € 36 million.¹⁸ This drastic diminution is due to the facts that the Italian parliament has to vote on the amount of subsidies on a yearly basis and that the financial capacity was primarily used for building the MoSE-project for years. Today, it must be clearly stated that the lack of funding for all the other aims of the Special Law for Venice has had highly negative impact on the state of conservation of the city of Venice and on the OUV of the World Heritage property. Therefore, the financial subsidy based on the Special Law must be predictable for the site management and be raised and stabilised.¹⁹

Recommendation 17

¹⁶ Canalisation, water-tubes for firemen, waste management, etc.

¹⁷ Areas of San Marco and Rialto.

¹⁸ The Government has provided additional non regular funding in order to support the site, including 457 million euros in the frame of the 2016 Venice Agreement, and approximately 100 million euros as emergency measure, following the November 2019 high tide event. However, this does not negate the concern that the support provided to the property for the most part is insufficient and highly irregular.

¹⁹ The Mayor of Venice considers that € 150 million would be the necessary and adequate amount.

Provide adequate funding to the Municipality of Venice and the further stakeholders in accordance with the current version of the Special Law for Venice for installing and maintaining urban infrastructure and the public and private real estate owners to restore the historic architecture of the city.

The Mission was informed, that despite lacking subsidies foreseen by the Special Law for Venice, 360 houses in public possession have been restored in the last five years and afterwards rented to young persons and families. However, the extent of the "restoration" seems to be very different, ranging from a simple repainting of the façade to structural interventions and the installation of sanitary facilities.

Obviously, the situation for private owners of real estate is very difficult. Due to the special conditions of the situation on the island, the cost for ordinary maintenance and for modernising the technical equipment is high. Many such buildings are in poor condition.

As the superintendence (authority responsible for the protection of cultural heritage²⁰) can intervene only on the listed structures (some 3000 houses out of 20'000), the influence on the way in which the majority of private houses is treated when building work is done, seems to be limited. At least, some elements like the composition and colour of the plaster can be controlled. The internal structures, on the other hand, can be changed or exchanged at the owner's convenience.

The municipality is aware of this problem. However, there is no provision in its budget to subsidise private renovations. It is indispensable to help private real estate owners in the additional difficulties they have in Venice to maintain the buildings. The origin of the funds, be it from the state or the municipality, is not relevant.

Like any other owner of a so-called "first home" in Italy, owners of real estates in Venice could benefit from fiscal advantages when renovating their house.²¹ However, the special conditions in Venice that make any building intervention more expensive have to be considered.

The Mission was informed that currently a further revision of the Special Law is under discussion.²² In this context, it is important that the new version not only mentions but takes into account "Venice and its Lagoon" as a World Heritage property. Therefore, the obligations linked to the World Heritage Convention (ratified by the Italian government in 1977) and the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention should be included in this regulation with operational tools, considering also Law No.77 of 20 February 2006 on "Special measures for the protection and use of Italian sites of cultural, landscape and environmental interest, included in the List of World Heritage Sites, placed under the protection of UNESCO". That would mean that fulfilling these commitments be better secured.

The revised Special Law for Venice and its Lagoon should strictly provide for the site management system and define its governance together with the future buffer zone. It also should provide for a series of precise indications regarding the transformations of the territory and the Heritage Impact Assessments, to be integrated into the procedures at all levels (national, regional, supralocal, local), as well as guaranteeing the necessary links between the various bodies in charge of protecting and safeguarding the management of the World Heritage property. This would ensure that the State Party undertakes the responsibility of the main strategical decisions and

²⁰ *Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per il Comune di Venezia e Laguna.*

²¹ The Italian system of "Art Bonus" is applicable exclusively on public buildings.

²² *Camera dei Deputati. Proposta di legge. Modifiche e integrazioni alla legislazione speciale per la salvaguardia di Venezia e della sua laguna. 7 dicembre 2018.*

obligations for safeguarding and protecting the property on an enhanced level. (See also the sub chapter on “Experimental Electromechanical Module (MoSE)”.

Recommendation 18

Revise the Special Law for Venice, including fully the fact of the inscription of “Venice and its Lagoon” (with the planned buffer Zone) on the World Heritage List and clearly defining the consequential obligations.

Management of public spaces

Within the city of Venice and initiated by considerations of safety and order in public spaces, the municipality has taken the initiative to eliminate or replace several private constructions that it considered to be unsuitable and unsightly.

The numerous mobile sales booths installed every morning on spots of major tourist affluence, selling souvenirs of all kinds, often of questionable quality are an obstacle for the normal flow of pedestrians and, also, they are ugly. Step by step the approval for the installation of these mobile stands is withdrawn. The action is combined with the reduction of surface used on squares by bars and restaurants and the associated equipment for wind and sun protection. The mission was shown several examples of squares that have recovered their architectural “aura” after having been cleared of such massive installations for selling souvenirs. It is convinced that this initiative is a contribution to a worthy urban aspect of the World Heritage Property. However, it realised that for the moment only few improvements have been realised and that on important spots the works still has to be done – a realisation stage by stage seems adequate, but it is important to ultimately guarantee a holistic implementation.

Another issue presented to the Mission was the marketplace on the island Tronchetto occupied by sellers of souvenirs. Obviously, their sales booths have been quite messy and seemed to give a bad impression to the tourists. They were eliminated and replaced by prefabricated container-like boxes. However, the new boxes lack design quality, they are schematically lined up and form dark, unshaped outdoor spaces. The Mission is of the opinion that architectural requirements for such an urban infrastructure must be set high, especially in a World Heritage property. The mission is of the opinion that in the concrete case these requirements are by no means fulfilled.

A third initiative in the same direction concerns the fishermen’s installation in the Lagoon, self-built platforms, on which small huts in do-it-yourself-manner are erected, in which the material required for practising the profession is stored. The image of these installations is very picturesque, but obviously platforms and huts represent a risk for the safety of the users and for the environment. The Mission was shown the intentions to replace these installations by massive platforms and highly uniformed material storage. The Mission recommends limiting the regulatory prescribed elements to a strict minimum (e.g. size and construction of the platform, size and admitted materials of the shed) and to leave a maximum of individual choice to the single owner respectively user.

The fundamental question is ensuring high quality buildings from a cultural perspective that is especially important within World Heritage properties. The Mission reminds that the University IUAV (*Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia*) is present in Venice and would be an excellent partner for exchanging ideas about new urban ‘equipments’.

Recommendation 19

Submit all projects for new urban equipment to a competitive procedure in order to obtain a high urban and architectural quality.

On 21st and 22nd January 2018 at Davos, the European Ministers of Culture (including Italy) adopted a declaration which highlights pathways towards politically and strategically promoting the concept of a high-quality *Baukultur* (culture of built environment) in Europe.

The declaration marks the starting point of the ongoing Davos Process which aims to continue the discourse on *Baukultur*. Core terms of the Declaration such as “quality”, “joint responsibility” and “cultural sustainability” are scientifically consolidated. At a political level, better policies are to be implemented which embrace the culture-centred concept of *Baukultur* and integrate the vision of a high-quality *Baukultur* as a core policy objective.

The industrial area of Venice: Port of Marghera

The origins of the industrial area of Marghera date back to the 19th Century. The expansion of the harbour was the consequence of the growing number of industrial enterprises. After World War II, in the 1960s, the area with the harbour and the industrial activities was significantly expanded – an initiative that was to allow the Venetians to participate in the Italian industrial boom.

From today's viewpoint, it is not understandable how it was possible to install heavy industry (including a petrochemical complex) within the unique and delicate Lagoon, in front of Venice itself. Every effort must now be made to mitigate the negative impact on the World Heritage Site, especially on the natural and cultural values of the Lagoon.

Today, Marghera is one of the largest industrial ports in Europe. The area is occupied mainly by petrochemistry, metallurgy, mechanical industry, and shipbuilding. Especially the Marghera petrochemical complex, a sprawling industrial cluster, is a heavy mortgage for the region. It occupies a strategic point within the linking of Mestre and Venice. A power plant generating electricity, which according to the information provided to the Mission is actually coal-fired, is also located on the site. The economic decline of the beginning of this century hit Marghera hard; in 2010, the government declared the entire complex an “industrial crisis area”.

However, the area is important for maintaining jobs in the region, even if it seems that an important part of the positions is filled with non-local workers. The Mission was informed that after tourism, the second biggest economic resource for Venice and the region is the port activity (especially the industrial related activities in Marghera), therefore, its preservation has a high importance to maintain the local social life.

The Mission was provided brief information about the need to clean up the polluted land in the area. Huge works were already carried out to build solid ramparts on the shores of the industrial port that prevents the polluted soil to get in connection with the Lagoon waters. Strategic plans were also shared about the construction of a hydrogen producing plant and station to provide this alternative fuel to cars, boats and aircrafts (it would be the first of a kind in Italy). Another plant would be built to produce biogas. These projects were considered by the municipality a part of their strategy for a shift to sustainable industry.

Nevertheless, the Mission did not get substantive information on how the area will be dealt with on the overall level in the near and medium future. No clear ideas on how the situation could be improved were presented. The presence of the industrial area is clearly considered an important element of the local and regional economy that sustains many jobs. However, the further development must be planned in full respect to the World Heritage property and in this concern must include essential improvement. It is most important that it also includes the future use of the different areas of wasteland.

Concerning the cargo ship movements in this area, both the ro-ro-terminal at Fusina and the new container terminal at Marghera are installations that cause considerable traffic within the Lagoon (through the Malamocco – Marghera cargo channel). In 2015 the UNESCO/ICOMOS/Ramsar Reactive Monitoring mission “strongly support(ed) the principle that a multi modal terminal for oil tankers and container transport vessels be established outside of the Lagoon and not necessitating navigation of such ships inside the Lagoon.” This mission considers that this recommendation is still valid and should be implemented, to enhance the state of the ecosystem in the Lagoon.

Recommendation 20

Develop and share with the World Heritage Committee through the Secretariat a clear strategy on the rehabilitation, improvement and future uses of the Marghera area, in line with the Road Map and Action Plan, as well as with the 2015 World Heritage and Sustainable Development Policy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The connections of Venice with the residential areas of the mainland

The mission understood that today, Venice and its Lagoon function in close symbiosis with its surrounding mainland areas, especially Mestre with its port Marghera that was merged with Venice in 1926. These are the socio-economic centres of the City of Venice. Most of the people working in Venice live in these areas, which also function as important transportation centres for private, public and freight traffic. Mestre became the modern extension of the historic city of Venice, offering its residents services, comforts, and infrastructures that the islands and peninsulas in the Lagoon could not or hardly provide. Marghera as explained elsewhere in the report is the most important industrial area of the Metropolitan City.

The Mission was also informed that initially Mestre was a city that was expanding in an unorganised and unregulated manner (mostly by residents moving out from Venice after World War II). The municipality of Venice wishes to mitigate and improve this situation by “greening” the city and with new urban developments.

On 1 December 2019, a referendum was held in order to ask the local people if they wish the historic city of Venice to be politically separated from Mestre and the mainland. Only 32% of the residents of Venice were participating in the referendum, out of which 85% voted in favour of this decision. Nevertheless, the Mission understood that the referendum was not considered valid due to the low participation rate.

Recommendation 21

As in the current political municipal system, the mainland areas are managed together with Venice and the habitable islands/peninsulas in the Lagoon, ensure that all changes and development projects of these areas follow a joint management strategy that ensures the preservation and protection of the World Heritage property and its OUV.

5.2. Development plans and large infrastructure projects within the property and its setting (including the future buffer zone)

Management of Urban Planning

In the future buffer zone urban planning is based on the existing settlement tissue. The two main objectives presented to the mission was urban regeneration of the Veneto region and the control of land consumption, both envisaged with specified regulations introduced by Regional Law n. 14 of 2017 and implemented by all the municipalities belonging to the proposed buffer zone. The authorities on the level of the Veneto region, are handling housing regulations and traffic infrastructures as well. The urban planning on the metropolitan and the local level are shared and are carried out under the Regional Territorial Coordination Plan (the plan includes strategies of infrastructure, landscape, and urban planning). The Superintendence collaborates with the local authorities on the planning applications.

Concerning planning and control of land consumption in the wider area of the planned buffer zone, several instruments were introduced for suppressing this impact (the goal is 0% of land consumption by 2050). In the awareness of the ecosystem-functions that it guarantees and its worth as a non-renewable resource, the consumption of agricultural and natural soil is to be avoided, rather it is recovered and enhanced. Further on, the transition from expansion planning to the redevelopment and regeneration is promoted. Restrictions on land consumption are regulated by EU directives, and there is no national regulation on this issue. Compliance with the EU directives is ensured on the regional level. The main tool to reduce land consumption is using already built in areas and structures regenerating and modernising them.

The urban regeneration or redevelopment includes demolition of incongruous works or elements of decay as well as artefacts falling in areas with hydraulic and geological danger²³. In cases of demolition, natural conditions of soil are restored. Further on, measures for recovery, redevelopment, and destination of the existing building heritage for any type of use compatible with the urban and environmental characteristics through the improvement of building quality are taken.

The urban redevelopment plans also include measures against urban decay, disorganized urban layout, lack of infrastructure and services, and against socio-economic degradation, conditions of abandonment, overcrowding and phenomena of economic and social impoverishment or marginalization.

The Mission got the impression that important efforts are made. These are primarily concentrated on technical issues and on quantifiable questions. In contrast, considerations for a built environment of higher quality seem not yet to be a priority. The Commission for Quality and Architectural Beauty (*Commissione regionale per la qualità e la bellezza architettonica*), established within the regional structure, may be a beginning. With its general task of preparing studies, collecting data and making proposals aimed at promoting quality in architectural, urban and landscape design, obviously it has no direct influence on the built reality. The above-mentioned Davos Declaration on *Baukultur* (culture of built environment) could be a helpful instrument to improve this very important aspect of the urban redevelopment.

On the level of the Metropolitan City of Venice the "Strategic Metropolitan Plan" (*Piano Strategico Metropolitan PSM*) is being implemented. It is not an urbanistic plan and does not include precise commitments to concrete planning, but only development targets. Thus, it fixes official guidelines for metropolitan city institutions and for the municipalities. The plan is divided in four different zones, Eastern Area, Miranese, Riviera del Brenta and South Area, each of them having its own priorities.

²³ These are governed by Regional Law n. 14 of 2019, called 'Veneto 2050'.

Within the plan some main strategies valuable for all communes are fixed. These strategies make evident that the emphasis is on economic and tourism issues. The first principle is to ensure an optimal size for sharing Venice brand in all territory and starting a marketing policy, the second one is to better integrate infrastructures and logistic areas, compatibly with urban production and services system. The third principle concerns resilience and intends to prepare the adaption to climate change; it intends to “turn the risk into opportunity” to improve citizen quality life and to protect natural and cultural sights.

The Mission was presented some development projects on smaller islands. Mostly, they consist in recuperation of historical complexes in public ownership that are in bad condition. The money for the necessary restoration work is to be acquired by transmitting the ownership to a private investor who is given the possibility to realise a lucrative additional building complex. The Mission realised that this leads to tourism-orientated projects adding day-tourists in the core of Venice. Further on, it is questionable to privatise public historic buildings and entire islands.

Buildings in the setting of the property and the planned buffer zone

Due to the flat geographical terrain of the closer and wider setting of the World Heritage property, new developments and changes in these areas could have a strong visual impact. Additionally, the wider setting of the property is important from an environmental point of view, as the sweet water sources of the Lagoon are located in these areas. The delineation of the planned buffer zone of the property is taking this phenomenon into consideration.

In the more distant parts of the planned buffer zone the problematic of new buildings seems to be of small importance and, considering the socioeconomic condition of the territories, problems are quite unlikely to arise. The situation within the flat lands surrounding the Lagoon is the other way around. Especially Mestre, but also some other smaller centres are economically strong towns. Buildings of important size will unavoidably have a major influence on the property even more since the flat topography allows to see them from far away.

However, in the recent years, no new major restoration or new construction project, which may affect the OUV of the property, had been notified by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre according to Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. Therefore, the Mission assessed the projects that were presented by the State Party, and reviewed in the frame of the current report, additional significant projects (already implemented or planned), which it considered to be in line with the above description and information about them is publicly available.

The “Hybrid Tower” near the station of Mestre has got a construction permit in 2012; the construction began in 2013 and was completed in 2016.²⁴ Its architectural features will not be analysed within the frame of this report, nevertheless it is noted that with its height of 81 metres (19 storeys), it has become an important landmark not only for Mestre but for the entire area of the Lagoon. The publicity for the tower speaks of “an unforgettable view on Venice and the Lagoon”, and in fact, the tower is visible from far away, notably from many viewpoints of the City of Venice and has a strong impact on the OUV of the property. On the preliminary basis of the vision from different viewpoints, the Mission considers the tower, situated within the proposed buffer zone, may have an adverse visual impact on the World Heritage property. In its relationship with the OUV of the city of Venice, the Mission considers the hybrid tower to be too high. The Mission was informed that as the tower was located near the railway station of Mestre, it was considered unproblematic. The Hybrid tower is not within the

²⁴ <https://asastudioalbanese.com/work/htm-hybrid-tower-mestre/>

property, nevertheless, **Decision 40 COM 7B.52** requested “the State Party to halt all new projects within the property prior to the mid-term assessment of the Management Plan, and the submission of details of proposed developments, together with Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), to the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, for review by the Advisory Bodies.” With regard to its unusual height and mass in comparison with the buildings around it, it was a project necessary to be notified to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, which would likely advise it to be halted.

The Mission underlines that especially under the condition of the flat land the addition of any building that overtops the average maximum height of the existing townscape (in the case of Mestre buildings have some 8 storeys) needs to be carefully assessed regarding its potential impact on the OUV of the World Heritage property (a Heritage Impact Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Assessment should be carried out) at the early planning stages of the planned projects and before any final decisions are taken. Furthermore, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, any project that may potentially have an impact on the OUV has to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre; notice should be given as soon as possible. Doubtlessly, the hybrid tower would have been a project to be evaluated properly and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review and comments by the Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

The Mission was presented a further project on the opposite side of the railway station. It offers a large green park area to the public and, most importantly, a new bridge that would connect the areas of Mestre and Marghera over the railway tracks. However, the private investor wishes to construct a 28-storey high-rise building as compensation. Whereas an Environmental Impact Assessment is under elaboration, the Mission was informed that a Heritage Impact Assessment is not obligatory to be carried out for this project according to the relevant legal regulations. The project has to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre.

A project called 'Venus Venis' is also under development. The construction will be a 22-storey high-rise building of 100 m height, located immediately behind the harbour area of Marghera is planned within the project. From the city of Venice, the visibility of this tower would also be pronounced and would impose a similar issue as explained above for the high rise building planned next to the railway station at Mestre.

The Mission recommends that any construction-work for buildings exceeding a total height eight storeys be halted and no project exceeding this height be approved prior to developing a Skyline Policy for the property and its setting (including its planned buffer zone).

Recommendation 22

Halt any construction overtopping the average maximum height of the existing townscape and ensure that no further permit for buildings exceeding the average maximum height of the existing built fabric be issued in the setting and the planned buffer zone of the World Heritage property prior to the establishment of an Integrated Master Plan for construction projects within the property and its future buffer zone with a clear concept in relation to a Tall Building/Skyline Policy with maximum heights.

The Integrated Master Plan must be controlled by professional visibility studies for planned buildings within an Environmental Impact Assessment and/or a Heritage Impact Assessment, prepared by independent specialists. With this information and before any decision on it, the plan must be submitted to the World Heritage Committee, through the Secretariat.

GPL storage facility. Chioggia

The plant for storage of GPL (*Gas di Petrolio Liquefatto*/liquefied petroleum gas) in Chioggia was brought to the attention of the World Heritage Centre in 2018 by third parties. Following the transmission of this information to the State Party in line with Paragraph 174 of the Operational Guidelines, the State Party provided information to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in May 2019 in relation to this issue, in the frame of additional information to the State Party State of Conservation report for the 43 World Heritage Committee session (2019, Baku).

The storage facility was visited by the Mission. It was given all necessary information in relation to the licensing process, the construction and planned operation of the facility by representatives of the company, the state, and the municipality. The first authorisation dates to 2009 when a relocation of the existing gasoil storage with a capacity of 1'350 m³ was planned. In 2014 a project to add a GPL storage facility with a capacity of 9'000 m³ was submitted to the Italian Authorities.

The mission understood that the State Party had an obligation to comply with the EU Directive '2014/94 on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure', nevertheless the procedure for licensing the construction of the facility were conducted in a way that disregarded the fact that the designated area was within the World Heritage property, and during the process, the potential impacts of this projects on the OUV of the property were not considered.

The mission was informed that the Ministries of Economic Development and of Infrastructure and Transports authorised the new plant according to a procedure established by Law n. 5 of 9 February 2012²⁵ as it has been considered 'strategic infrastructure' for the security of energy supplies on the national level and excluding its licensing from the usual procedure. This decision was taken in consciousness that

- with the "law for Venice" the area is protected²⁶
- with the ministerial decree of 1st August 1985, the area is protected,
- the implication of the Ministry of Culture is mandatory,
- for any such implant a Heritage Impact Assessment is required,
- the Environmental Impact Assessment²⁷ states the equipment poses risks to the public health,
- the plant is not in concordance neither with the plans of the Regional Ambiental Plan nor with the plans of the city of Chioggia.

In what concerns the procedures that are put forward by the World Heritage Convention and the Operational Guidelines the State Party did not respect the rules. This very important project plan was not submitted, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, to the World Heritage Centre for review, and no Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was developed with a specific section focusing on the potential impact of the project on the OUV of the property. Moreover, the State Party did not consider the request of the World Heritage Committee "to halt all new projects within the property" in line with **Decision 40 COM 7B.52**.

The plant is in the southern part of the World Heritage property and in intermediate vicinity of the historical centre of Chioggia. The Mission was informed that no alternative location was considered for the facility. It is composed by three horizontally

²⁵ Paragraphs 57 and 57bis state that the construction and operation of plants for storage of LPG with a 200-ton capacity or greater are granted by the State.

²⁶ National Law 16th April 1973 n.171 Interventions for Venice protection. Article 1 "The Italian Republic guarantees the protection of the landscape, historical, archaeological and artistic environment of the city of Venice and its lagoon, the protection of the hydraulic balance, the conservation of the environment from atmospheric pollution and of the waters and vital socio-economic services within the framework of general development and territorial structure of the Region."

²⁷ EIA-Commission of the Province of Venice, No 4/2015.

disposed tanks hidden under a hill, has recently been completed together with the necessary technical installations. It is of important size, measuring some 70 x 36 meters with a height of some 15 m. The Mission was informed that necessary authorisations for the operation of the plant are not yet delivered and, as the compliance check with the Port Development Plan has not been done or is not positive, the request for a prolongation of an exceptional permit seems to have been refused.

In 2015, the reactive monitoring mission recommended: "The Mission strongly supports the principle that a multi modal terminal for oil tankers and container transport vessels be established outside of the Lagoon and not necessitating navigation of such ships inside the Lagoon." This recommendation is still valid.

The situation of the storage-facility is in immediate vicinity of the historical centre of Chioggia. The small town, developed on the shores of the Lagoon, is an important component of the World Heritage property; it is often regarded to be the little brother of Venice. It is a compact town fabric built on an island that is structured by waterways. Its surroundings are very vulnerable. As mentioned before, the new storage plant is very close to the historic centre and is of significant size; its length corresponds to two thirds of the footways (*calli*) in Chioggia. Thus, the new installation cannot be overlooked neither arriving to this important part of the property, nor when looking from the historical centre towards the Lagoon. In direct relationship with the small-sized structure of buildings that characterises Chioggia, the storage-facility is in impairment with the integrity of this part of the World Heritage property and has a negative impact on its OUV.

Another factor are questions about the security of such an installation. Any additional tanker in the canal between the inlet of Chioggia and the port of Chioggia is adding to the destabilisation of the delicate ecological environment. Further on, despite all precautions, the possibility of a GLP-hazard cannot be excluded; and an accident could have devastating consequences for the population and constructions of the historic town.

Recommendation 23

Ensure that the permit for operating the storage-facility for petroleum products in Chioggia be rejected, the plant that presents an important threat to the OUV be dismantled and moved into an alternative location, preferably outside the property's boundaries. In case the relocation is planned within the property or its setting, an EIA and HIA be conducted prior to taking final decision about its location, and the plans be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies.

Expansion of the International Airport Venice. Tessera

The Mission was informed about the measures already taken and the plans for the extension of traffic of the airport "Marco Polo". This development is in contradiction to the observation stated within the Report of the Joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/RAMSAR Reactive Monitoring Mission 2015, that reads: "Substantial expansions of the current international airport facilities need therefore to be planned for another location outside of the World Heritage property and its future buffer zone."

The airport is under the control of the Italian Government and is managed by the SAVE S.p.A company. Initially, the airport was conceived for 3 million passengers, but in 2019 it was used by 11,6 million, and by 2030 this number is foreseen to rise to 12 million. The current Masterplan for the facility (Airport Development Plan) is valid between 2014-2021. The next programming period will last until 2035. The airports of Brescia, Treviso, Verona, and Venice are operated by the same company.

The recent developments of the airport included the following investments:

- the extension of the terminal building with an additional pier,
- new buildings for the carriers,
- extension of the parking facilities (also providing a P&R for local people not only related to air travel),
- hydraulic (security) works outside the airport,
- upgrading of the existing runway with the elongation of the subsidiary/secondary runway to become equally long as the main runway.

The Mission was informed that no additional runways or further extension of the airport is planned outside its 'existing' boundaries.

In order to compensate the overall negative impact of the airport on the sensitive ecological area where it is located, a part of the investments (€ 29 million) were reserved for carrying out mitigation measures for enhancing the condition of humid areas, channels, and requalification of saltmarshes (*barene*). The agency ARPAV²⁸ supervises, controls and reports on all environmental issues.

The Mission was also informed that the SAVE company, managing the above mentioned four airports in the Region, intends to segment these airports along certain strategies, with no intention to significantly increase the number of passengers at Venice airport.

The Report of the Joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/RAMSAR Reactive Monitoring Mission 2015 stated that "Substantial expansions of the current international airport facilities need therefore to be planned for another location outside of the World Heritage property and its future buffer zone." The Mission considers that due to its location, operation manner and despite the mitigation measures, the Venice Marco Polo Airport has a negative impact on the World Heritage property.

Recommendation 24

Segment out as much of the traffic as possible of the Venice Marco Polo Airport to other airports in the region. On a longer term, the Airport be significantly reduced in its activity and the number of aircraft movements.

Overall comments on development projects

Important developments within the area of the World Heritage property take place on the shores of the Lagoon. On the other hand, important developments are carried out in the mainland area of the City of Venice, within the buffer zone, especially in Mestre, where the expansion of a modernised urban area is the trend, including high-rise buildings.

As already stated in the previous chapters of this report, a shared vision by relevant actors and stakeholders, and an aligned Road Map with an Action Plan, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, is still missing. It would set out an overall vision for the whole property and its buffer zone. As the framework for how development should be regulated in the property, its buffer zone and its wider setting is lacking, the development is not in every case correctly linked with the necessities of maintaining the OUV. The Mission considers the GPL storage facility in Chioggia as a most relevant project with a serious negative influence on the OUV.

As explained in Chapter 5.4 of this report, the primary purpose of the planned buffer zone (the current setting of the property) is to provide an added layer of protection to the property. Therefore, handling development projects and planned changes in the setting of the property (within the planned buffer zone) should be carried out by adequate strategies and policies, which ensure the long-term protection and preservation of the OUV of the property. The Road Map should consist an overall

²⁸ Agenzia Regionale per la Prevenzione e Protezione Ambientale del Veneto.

integrated strategy defining clear policies for urban development, agreed by all relevant sectors and fields of the site management. This integrated strategy should also be part of the updated Management Plan of the property and implemented through an efficient management system.

The State Party (through an effective site management) should ensure (as highlighted in Chapter 5.4) that the guidance for handling changes and major construction projects of Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines is respected, and projects which may affect the OUV of the property are notified to the World Heritage Committee through the World Heritage Centre as soon as possible (for instance, before drafting basic documents for specific projects) ...”and before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, so that the Committee may assist in seeking appropriate solutions to ensure that the OUV of the property is fully preserved.”. Heritage Impact Assessments are also highly important to accompany any planned major interventions, as “these assessments should serve to identify development alternatives, as well as both potential positive and negative impacts on the OUV of the property and to recommend mitigation measures against degradation or other negative impacts within the property or its wider setting.”

The Mission noted that compliance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines has been systematically disregarded by the site management and the State Party. This issue is advised to be resolved as soon as possible and adequate cooperation measures are to be put in place, to ensure that all responsible actors are aware of this obligation. The Mission also draws the attention of the State Party and the site management to the fact that the World Heritage Centre continuously receives concerns from third parties (individuals and civil associations, NGOs, etc.) in relation to the state of conservation and the management of the property. The World Heritage Centre transmits this information to the State Party when appropriate, to verify the source and the contents of the information and request comments. In the recent years, this transmitted information is either not answered by the State Party or were answered with a long delay. Therefore, the Mission points out the importance of taking such submissions seriously and ensuring that they are answered within a short time and in adequate detail. Enhancing the involvement of the civil society in the management of the property in a participatory manner and ensuring an appropriate level of communication with it is an important concern of the World Heritage Convention.

Recommendation 25

Ensure that efficient communication is maintained with the World Heritage Centre and that the concerns and information of third parties submitted to the World Heritage Centre and then transmitted for verification and comments by the Secretariat, are answered within a short time and in adequate details.

5.3. Large ships entering the Lagoon

As indicated in Chapter 5.2. the management of the waters within the Venice Lagoon and the related ports are divided between several authorities. The Municipality of Venice and the municipalities of the other islands are responsible for managing issues related to the internal canals. The Interregional Authority for Public Works and Infrastructure of Veneto, Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli-Venezia Giulia manages overall the water and the seabed of the Lagoon. While the North Adriatic Sea Port Authority oversees the ports of Venice and Chioggia, and the navigation channels for large ships.

The issue with the large ships entering the Lagoon relates closely to tourism-pressure. The image of the 'enormous' cruiser ships crossing through the heart of Venice is a disturbing one not only for the residents but for the visitors as well and, in the understanding of general public, the main problem of Venice and its tourism-pressure are the large ships entering the Lagoon. The Mission was informed by the State Party that most cruise liners do not make a stopover but start or end their journey in Venice. Therefore, most of the passengers of these ships do not stay in Venice but travel straight from or to their places of residence; consequently, with regard to the issue of high number of visitors in Venice, the number of tourists coming from cruise ships are negligible. Anyhow, this assertion of the State Party needs to be underpinned by substantial data. In any case the visual relationship between the huge cruisers and the historic urban landscape of Venice is very impressive. The movement of the enormous masses through the water causes significant damage to the waterbed and may lead to accidents as the one of MSC Opera on 2 June 2019.

Evidently, big cruise ships cause pollution and harm the underwater soil. A ban on all large cruise ships would be a substantial improvement for maintaining the property's OUV. However, it must be clear that in itself it would not solve one of the most fundamental problems of Venice, i.e. tourism-pressure.

Alternative navigation routes for the large ships

As background to this topic, the Mission recalls that in 2015 the UNESCO/ICOMOS/Ramsar Reactive Monitoring mission was informed about several options that were studied for an alternative nautical access to the port of Venice and Marghera:

- the project '*Contorta Sant'Angelo*',
- the project '*Tangenziale Lagunare*' (that afterwards was developed into the project '*Canale Grande Capacità Sud Giudecca*'),
- the pre-feasibility study for a cruise ship harbour in *Bocca di Porto di Lido*,
- and the project '*Intermodale Marghera – Area Italiana Coke*'.

Since 2015, the situation has been clarified by the decision of the Interministerial Committee (*Comitatone*) of 7 November 2017, which chose to support an approach to deviate the big cruise ships to the industrial harbour of Marghera. This possibility was already proposed in 2015, but it was then rejected for safety reasons. The argumentation stated that the use of the same canal and port for passenger ships and tankers is insecure.

In 2015 mission report stated that it "clearly supports the strategic aim adopted by the local authorities, to prevent large ships (including cruise liners) from using the San Marco basin and Giudecca canal. A new location for passenger terminal facilities needs to be found outside of the Lagoon. The location should avoid large cruise ships to moving inside the Lagoon."

In relation to the alternative navigation routes, the so called Clini-Passera Decree²⁹ established that an alternative route had to be found for large vessels in Venice. Albeit so far no solution was approved, the Port Authority has taken numerous single decisions to mitigate the negative impact of large cruise ships passing the San Marco basin and the Giudecca canal, like limiting speed, regulations on technical equipment and pollution etc. and the increase of the number of tug ropes.³⁰

Alternatives for finding a solution to either navigate the cruise ships to an interior harbour in the Lagoon (to a new port in Marghera and/or to the already existing cruise terminal in Venice/Tronchetto), avoiding the San Marco basin and the Giudecca canal or to relocate the cruise terminal outside the Lagoon were presented to the Mission.³¹

For the first alternative, currently, the State Party seems to favour a solution for all cruise ships to use the existing Malamocco – Marghera cargo channel (the so called 'petrol canal'). For large units, a new terminal is to be built in the port of Marghera; while ships up to 40,000 gross register tons would continue from Marghera through the already existing, but out of use Vittorio Emanuele III canal to the current cruise terminal in Venice. Whilst the Malamocco – Marghera channel is adequate to be used by the cruise ships from a physical dimension³², if smaller cruise ships are to be docked at the present Venice cruise terminal, it would be necessary to considerably deepen the Vittorio Emanuele III canal in order to be operational for this objective. The dredging of this canal and the removal of the sediment, nevertheless, would likely have a large negative impact on the ecosystem of the Lagoon.

Another possibility to deviate cruise ships from the existing route within the Lagoon would be the use of the port of Chioggia. Nevertheless, the construction of a new cruise terminal would be necessary here, which would require the removal of an enormous amount of sediment; an alternative that would create again a huge negative impact on the fragile ecosystem of the Lagoon. Further on, the land-based infrastructure would by no means be enough to accommodate the additional traffic.

An alternative to dock the cruise ships outside the Lagoon was also presented to the Mission. The project proposal was developed by private initiative³³ and envisages a terminal between the Lagoon and the open sea, at the Lido inlet just outside the floodgates of the MoSE, on the coast of Punta Sabbioni. It would be suitable for the usage of 4 cruisers at the same time. Based on the Environmental Impact Assessment, the Ministry for the Environment has expressed a favourable opinion concerning this solution. However, other less advanced projects are under discussion as well.

In the understanding of the Mission, any alternative solution to dock large cruisers outside the Lagoon would need an ample amount of time to be implemented (5-10 years). Additionally, the environmental impact of these alternatives should be studied very carefully. An important question will be whether the new harbour will be built on the sea ground (as it is the case with the described project) or will be floating as

²⁹ Ministerial Decree nr. 78 of 2 March 2012 "Clini-Passera", which prohibits ships over 40.000 gross tonnage to enter certain ports, including Venice, but only if feasible alternative solutions could be found. Since this decree, the definition of big ships had also been revised, adding more factors next to weight to the criteria, including emission, noise, wave motion, visual impact, etc.

³⁰ The Venice Blue Flag Agreement, related to the emission level of cruisers, is also reviewed on a yearly basis.

³¹ The alternatives presented to the Mission were only possibilities out of many that were assessed by the North Adriatic Sea Port Authority.

³² The Marghera port is also housing the industry for constructing huge cruisers, which are moved out of the port through the Malamocco -Marghera channel, therefore, this industrial channel is already deep enough for passenger cruisers. No further dredging would be needed to dock them in Marghera.

³³ Initiated by the Duferco Group.

provided in another project.³⁴ A further concern would be the transportation of passengers to Venice and the other islands, and the foreseen negative impact related to it. It will be important to avoid generating new potential harming factors (including infrastructure for servicing the cruise ships), and to minimise interventions and other changes.

The Mission was informed that, after the endless discussions following the Clini-Passera Decree, the State Party wishes to deviate the ships over 40.000 gross ton from the San Marco basin and the Giudecca canal as a matter of urgency, which would also mean that it is considering temporary solutions. In the view of the Mission, in order to preserve the OUV of the property, a provisional solution that can be implemented by the end of 2020 at the latest is indispensable.

A solution for directing all cruise ships over 40,000 gross register tons to Marghera where a terminal is to be established with provisional means would be an acceptable alternative. In the understanding of the Mission, the cruise ships below 40.000 gross register tons would use the current route through the Giudecca canal and dock at the Venice cruise terminal. The Mission considers that the dredging and the use of the Vittorio Emmanuele III canal for smaller vessels should not be supported, regarding its potential negative consequences for the environment.

In the meantime, a more permanent solution should be found that is in line with the objective of preserving the Lagoon, and in general the OUV of the property on the long term. This would imply the final ban of the cruise ships from the Lagoon, either by studying a solution to create an alternative port outside the Lagoon (taking into consideration the above described potential dangers), or by directing the large cruisers to dock in other, better suited ports in the region. It has been argued to the Mission that since its existence, Venice always had a port with essential importance for the city and the republic. As the modern shipping industry has nothing in common with historical shipping, neither in its intensity nor in the dimensions of the vessels, this argument is obsolete today.

The long-term objective must be to prevent cruise ships entering the Lagoon in order to preserve its fragile and unique ecosystem and to ensure the protection of the OUV of the property in the long-term. If that goal cannot be reached in a reasonable time span, the transfer of the cruise industry or parts of it to other well-equipped harbours (like Trieste) should be considered.

Recommendation 26

Ensure that by the end of 2020, cruise ships over 40,000 gross register tons be directed to a provisional terminal in the port of Marghera as a temporary solution, and search for solutions to ban the cruise ships from the Lagoon altogether.

During the discussions, the Mission received information about the possibility to raise the limit of 40.000 gross register tons for the large ships, which, according to the Clini-Passera Decree, has been the basis of the discussions for years. According to the provided visual images that represent ships within this weight limit in the Giudecca canal in relationship with the historical town, the Mission considers it as being the maximum limit of tonnage that should be allowed to further pass in the Giudecca canal on a temporary basis.

Recommendation 27

Limit cruise ships allowed to pass within the San Marco basin and the Giudecca canal to a maximum of 40,000 gross register tons.

³⁴ Avamporto Galleggiante Bocca di Lido. Relazione Generale 2015.

Digging new channels for medium size cruise-ships

The 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission report expressed concern about the tidal flow patterns in the deeper central part of the Lagoon, leading to sediment loss due to increased bottom erosion as a consequence of digging deep water channels over the course of the 20th century.

This Mission regrets that, despite its recommendation of 2015, no integrated water and sediment flow model was presented to the Mission to forecast possible water flow and sedimentation changes, as consequences of digging deep-water waterways. Such an integrated modelling study is a prerequisite for more detailed assessments to calculate the likely consequences of digging of waterways, or deepening existing ones, on the Lagoon hydrology, sedimentation and erosion, its biodiversity and species communities, including commercially exploited fish and shellfish.

Recommendation 28

Develop an integrated Lagoon water and sediment flow model as soon as possible.

For any currently operational waterway channel that contributes significantly to sediment erosion from the Lagoon to the Sea, remediation measures should be sought (erosion barriers, etc.), including its possible blocking and replacement with another existing waterway for navigation. Any digging of additional new channels, or deepening of existing ones (such as the *Canale Vittorio Emmanuele III*, or the narrow *Canale nuovo di Fusina* and *Canale contorta Sant'Angelo*) are likely to worsen the bottom erosion and the water fluxes between the Lagoon and the Adriatic Sea. Only if integrated modelling studies (as mentioned above) exclude such negative effects on the Lagoon ecosystem with a high probability, could the digging of new deep-water waterways be considered.

The Mission recommends that no digging of new waterway channels, nor deepening of existing ones should be considered. This applies also to the *Canale Vittorio Emmanuele III* providing a waterway for reasonably sized ships between Marghera harbour and Marittima passenger terminal. The maximum size of ships, including cruise-ships, entering the Lagoon, needs to be adapted to the maximum capacities (depths and widths) of the current waterway channels inside the Lagoon, not the other way around. This implies that the maximum size of ships allowed to enter the Lagoon needs to be defined.

In order to find long-term sustainable solutions as part of an integrated long-term territorial planning process, it is important to remove harbour facilities for large ships incompatible with the natural and cultural values of the property outside of its boundaries and outside of the Lagoon.

Recommendation 29

Use the Lagoon water flow and sediment transport model as a basis to take management decisions in order to avoid Lagoon bed erosion towards the Sea and clarify the related limits and restrictions for navigation waterway dredging and sediment relocation.

Recommendation 30

Based on the Lagoon water flow and sediment transport model, clarify the maximum size of ships that would be allowed to enter the Lagoon without the need for deeper waterway channel dredging.

Recommendation 31

Develop in the near future a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the relocation of the Marittima passenger terminal, as well as the Marghera large ship harbour facilities outside of the Lagoon.

5.4 Tourism Management

The tourism management in the Veneto region is carried out according to a strategic plan that is in line with the National Tourism Plan. There are 16 Destination Management Organisations in the region, which work along the lines of five main objectives, including the management of resources, protecting the residents, distributing visitors to less frequented destinations and balancing the extra costs for the enhancement and development of the city with an objective to regenerate the existing tourism facilities without creating new ones. The strategy also has a special focus on creating business networks that relate to tourism and which include primarily small and medium enterprises. For Venice and its Lagoon, the tourism strategy is based on the "Project for the Territorial Governance of Tourism in Venice", which includes regional tourism management objectives and also the enforcement of the local crafts³⁵ and through it, the promotion of quality tourism. The Mission was also informed that the UNESCO Sustainable Tourism Toolkit has been translated to Italian and is implemented by the relevant actors.

Despite of this cooperated strategy and the progress the State Party has clearly made in developing policies and tools to manage the tourism industry in an enhanced way, the Mission found the following issues still highly problematic, which need further focused attention from the State Party.

Mass Tourism Pressure

The pressure of mass tourism is one of the two main threats for the World Heritage property.

In Venice, constantly, every year, the number of arrivals and of stays of tourists is increasing.³⁶ The proportion between the number of residents and the number of tourists has become extremely disproportionate.³⁷ The number of residents of Venice is hardly over 50.000, while 250.000 in the larger metropolitan area³⁸. The mission was told that in the last five years (2015-2019), the tourist movement of the City of Venice is represented by an average annual number of arrivals equal to 4.991.018 and an average annual number of overnight stays equal to 11.489.451.³⁹ The number

³⁵ Like the traditional gondola boat making, glass production on the island of Murano and lace making in Burano.

³⁶ Between 2017 and 2018 the island of Venice registered 5.4% more arrivals and 4.5% more overnight stays (number of nights spent in the city).

³⁷ Van der Borg Jan e Russo Antonio Paolo: *Un Sistema di Indicatori per lo Sviluppo Turistico Sostenibile a Venezia*. Working Paper n. 06.97. Venezia, Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, 1997.

³⁸ In 1951 Venice had a population of 174,808 and the mainland (Mestre area) had 96,966.

³⁹ Data in 2017 for the *Comune di Venezia*: total arrivals 5.034.882, total overnights 11.685.819; in the 'Historic City': arrivals 3.155.548, overnights 7.862.292; in Lido: arrivals 184.753, overnights 558.982; in the mainland: arrivals 1.694.581, overnights 3.264.545 (*Annuario del Turismo* data 2017). Data in 2018 for the *Comune di Venezia*: total arrivals 5.255.499, total overnights 12.118.298; In the 'Historic City': arrivals 3.325.283, overnights 8.213.116; in Lido: arrivals 162.151, overnights 482.233; in the mainland: 1.768.065 arrivals, overnights 3.422.949 (*Annuario del Turismo* data 2018 - under publication). For comparison: According to the information communicated by the Bank of Greece, the number of people who travelled to Greece in 2018 totalled 30.12 million (<https://greece.greekreporter.com/2019/02/22/tourism-sees-record-year-as-over-30-million-visit-greece-in-2018/>).

of daily tourist (especially in summer peak days) is multiple times larger than the residents.

This phenomenon has a huge negative impact on the daily lives of residents. There are still some more quiet quarters in Venice, which are less frequented by the visitors, but a great part of the city is hit by extreme tourism pressure, including its servicing infrastructure. The largest problem lies with the day-trippers, people who visit the city of Venice just for a few hours, adding to the already huge number of visitors, but not really interested in the city's urban and cultural dimension.

The Mission was presented with an impressive tourism strategy for Venice and the Veneto region, and progress has been made to develop measures to manage, guide, educate and tax the tourists, which helps mitigating some negative impacts of mass tourism. For the enhanced management of mass tourism flows, the municipality of Venice is developing an entirely new instrument in the form of an Access Contribution that will become operational in summer 2020. The basic idea is that tourists should pay their share in the maintenance of the public services they use.⁴⁰ The contribution is not an entrance fee but a compensation for public space maintenance, street cleaning and security measures of all kind. Essentially, the tax must be paid by one-day-tourists only.⁴¹ The amount of the access fee is fixed at € 6.00. On days with lower inflow the fee is reduced to € 3.00, on days with critical numbers of tourists it is raised to € 8.00 or to a maximum of € 10.00 for the days with the highest number of expected visitors. The money collected will be used for financing public services and, hopefully, decrease the heavy burden of waste collection for residents. On the website of the commune an online calendar shows day per day the expected presence of tourists; so, tourists can choose the dates of their visit. The fee is compulsory; it can be paid on a mobile-phone-app a procedure similar to buying a train ticket and will be controlled. The app offers an access channel to services for city users, quick and easy booking access fees (and exemptions), payment of the fee, the integration of new application components as well as push and push to talk gauge notifications. With the fee paid, the tourist gets specific information from Venezia Unica, the official port of Tourism in Venice, about moving in Venice.

The Mission considers all these measures as be important and helpful for the management of the enormous and still increasing mass of tourists. They will help to better spread out the tourist influx. The intention to distribute tourists to less popular destinations might reinforce tourism in the less frequented communes around the Lagoon but will not decrease the number of tourists on the islands and will not prevent any tourist to visit the city of Venice. Efficient measures were not taken so far to radically reduce the number of visitors on the property, especially in Venice. The Mission had the impression that the Municipality of the City and Metropolitan City of Venice does not see the extremely high visitor numbers as a major threat to the property. On the contrary, they vigorously promote Venice as a tourist destination and facilitate the access. The presented tourism strategies and policies had the objective to distribute tourists in a more efficient way in the area and spread out or direct the time of their visit to less pressured dates of a year, but had no aim to significantly reduce their overall number (be they guests for several days or day-trippers). This attitude might be in relation to the fact that the major economic income of many individuals, firms and municipalities in the region is the tourism industry. Therefore, they have no interest to develop more efficient and drastic measures in relation to this

⁴⁰ Maintenance of the public urban space, cleaning, security-measures and -service etc.

⁴¹ By law, the following categories are excluded: residents in the Municipality of Venice – workers who access, due to their work activity, to the ancient city of the Municipality of Venice or to the other minor islands of the lagoon – students, including commuters, from schools and institutes in Venice or in the other smaller islands of the lagoon – individuals and members of the families of individuals who are found to have paid the single municipal tax (*imposta municipale unica* IMU) in the Municipality of Venice.

problem. Nevertheless, the Mission was informed through the NGOs that the impacts of tourism pressure is one of the main concerns of the residents of Venice and the islands. Their daily life is affected by it very strongly, and they do not feel efficiently supported by the municipality in their major problems (paying the highly overpriced rents of apartments or purchasing properties, which prices have risen sharply in the recent decades due to the tourism industry).

The Mission considers that the number of tourists in Venice largely exceeds the carrying capacity of the city as a living urban organism, be it in terms of the built structure or of the socio-economic consequence, and the World Heritage property in general. The mass tourism in Venice and its Lagoon, has a highly negative impact on OUV of the property and the attributes that convey the OUV. It has a destructive impact on the historic urban fabrics, on the environment of the Lagoon, and on social and cultural identities of its residents. It also makes the economy of the region unbalanced and vulnerable.

The authenticity of a World Heritage property not only includes attributes like form and design or material and substance – the material substance of the urban fabric, especially for the private properties in some areas is also threatened by neglect and poor state of conservation. For Venice, the authenticity of the property also has eminent dimensions in intangible qualities such as use and function, traditions, techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling. These dimensions are heavily called into question and eminently threatened by the exuberant tourism.

A similar statement is necessary for the integrity of a World Heritage property. Not only must it include all elements necessary to express its OUV and be of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance but it must also meet the condition that it doesn't suffer from adverse effects of development and/or neglect. In the case of Venice, to service the ever-growing number of visitors, the development of tourism infrastructure in the last decades has not been regulated and restrained in an adequate level, therefore, considerable deterioration and loss of urban space and cultural significance could already be detected.

The question how the number of tourists can be limited is crucial – doubtlessly, it is difficult to answer to. "... every [Italian] citizen can freely travel and stop in any part of the national territory, without prejudice to the limitations laid down by the law for health and security reasons."⁴² This is also true for EU-citizens who are guaranteed "... freedom of movement and generally ensures that they are subject to the same treatment as national citizens."⁴³ Selling entrance-tickets in a limited number would probably be legal only if it could be justified with arguments of security. Indeed, on the most crowded days an event creating panic several spots of the city would be disastrous. But even if it were legal, it would turn Venice still more into a giant open-air museum.⁴⁴

The special geographic situation of the islands of Venice could help to find solutions on the basis of so-called 'obstacles to approach'.⁴⁵ It would imply for visitors not reaching Venice so easily, so quickly and so cheaply as they do today. While the accessibility would be open for everyone, visitors would have to accept different types of inconvenience, more time for access and higher costs. Such systems could enable the reduction of the number of visitors in a more efficient way. This would, nevertheless, require a political will and a strong commitment from all levels of decision making.

⁴² Italian Constitution Article 16(1).

⁴³ European Commission, 2012: Articles 18 and 21.

⁴⁴ Musu Ignazio (ed.): Sustainable Venice: Suggestions for the Future. Dordrecht, Boston, London, 2001.

⁴⁵ The term is currently used in German: "Annäherungshindernis".

Smart Control Room

Over the last years and decades, one critical point in the tourist management of Venice has been the lack of precise, resilient data. There was no adequate data collection system about the number of tourists within one year or during one specific period or day. Especially, the number of day-trippers who represent a very important number was not quantifiable.

The Municipality of Venice has made an enormous effort to get more precise information, therefore, an integrated, highly digitalised realisation called Smart Control Room has been designed and set up in the island of Tronchetto in the offices of the local police, and will be operational foreseeably from the beginning of March 2020.

Collecting information about the presence of tourists is based on 34 cameras on control-points installed in neuralgic spots spread over the city. In addition to a Pedestrian Flow Counting System, the Smart Control Room also features a statistical system for detecting people present in the city by providing an aggregated data of TIM (Big data) telephone cells. So, it is possible to recognise if the same person is passing several control-points and if they are present in the city for how much time, hours, or days. The data are transmitted in real time, so that the authorities can individuate crowded parts of the city and possibly take measures to redirect people to other routes in order to reduce the crowding in neuralgic spots.

As, today, almost everybody has a smart phone, the system also works with obtaining an aggravated data from these devices. The country's area code of the smart phone of the counted person is analysed.⁴⁶ Using the characteristics of the telephone-number and the frequency of stays, it is also possible to distinguish tourists from residents or employees that daily come to work in Venice from the hinterland. And finally, the analysis of area codes permits to analyse the provenience of tourists coming to Venice.⁴⁷ All different data collected are combined; this doesn't permit to give exact numbers of the different kinds of visitors, but allows to have quite precise estimations –based always on the same panoply of data, they will allow to make correct comparisons between subsequent days, months and years.

Thus, the system allows to get the necessary data that are indispensable as a basis of any tourist management. It will also allow to identify possible blockages at neuralgic points in good time and divert the flow of people to other routes. However, the Mission considers it extremely important to ensure that this does not place an additional burden on neighbourhoods that are currently largely spared from tourism. Every effort should be made to ensure that such areas retain their quiet everyday character.

The Smart Control Room collects a lot of other data that are helpful for the management of the city. Very sophisticated possibilities allow to monitor the town. One important topic is the traffic on the water – the system allows to count the different types of boats, to follow the public transportation ships with their delays and time-advantage, and to effectuate a precise speed control – currently, in the inner part of Venice speed is limited to 5 miles for good-transportation, 8 miles for private passenger-transportation, 10 miles for public passenger-transportation.⁴⁸ The current "*moto ondoso*" is registered as well. Another important part of the information concentrated within the smart control room are atmospheric and water conditions. The entire weather-forecast-system and the alarm-system for high tide are integrated.

⁴⁶ The analysis of numbers even permits to know from which region Italian visitors come from.

⁴⁷ For the moment, the origin of Italians is broken down in detail by region, while for foreigners only the country of origin is registered.

⁴⁸ According to state laws, currently, the municipality has not the right to fine for speeding violations. The Mission was told that this grievance will be resolved within the next months.

The amalgam of all different parameters is indicated with a so-called “Venice Heartbeat”, expressed in different colours.

The Smart Control Room with all its possibilities to count and manage the tourist flow and bring together relevant data is an important achievement of the municipality and the responsible assessor; and must be highly valued for its innovation and precision. The Smart Control Room is situated in a building that also hosts the headquarters of the municipal police. Though the two institutions are independent of each other, police have insight into the collected data, which all are presented real time on large monitors. The Smart Control Room is a most helpful tool to enhance the management of mobility and security in Venice and to avoid critical situations.

Summarising the situation related to tourism management in the property, the Mission considers that the State Party did not comply with the request of the World Heritage Committee to develop a sustainable tourism strategy. Despite of progress made in enhancing the tourism management tools for Venice and the Lagoon region, the present situation does not yet represent an approach, which is based on dialogue and stakeholder cooperation where planning for tourism and heritage management is integrated in an adequate level, the natural and cultural assets are valued and protected, and an appropriate long-term strategy for tourism developed.

Recommendation 32

Develop adequate measures to substantially reduce the number of tourists, aware that otherwise the authenticity and integrity of the property is considerably compromised, and its OUV threatened.

Recommendation 33

Use and implement the UNESCO Sustainable Tourism Toolkit. Enhance the sustainable tourism management tools for mass tourism pressure related to the property with data and experience obtained from the operation of the Smart Control Room, to ensure the long-term protection and preservation of its OUV.

Recommendation 34

Develop pilot projects related to the management of mass tourism for sharing with site managers of other World Heritage properties, furthermore, cooperate and exchange information with them.

Tourism infrastructure

The Mission was informed about diverse restrictions taken by the Municipality to limit the increase of tourist infrastructure business and to better manage the pressure of tourism. The Mission was informed that no new cafés, restaurants or take away places are allowed to be opened in Venice.

A complete interdiction of new hotels had put into force in 2017, but hotels that already had a permit could be installed.⁴⁹ However, the Mission became aware of the fact that exemptions with a non-indifferent quantitative impact have since been given. The mainland area of the municipality of Venice are not under this obligation. Therefore, big hotels could and will be erected on the island of Tronchetto and several big hotel complexes are planned in Mestre. These will also contribute to an increase in the number of tourists. Furthermore, some of the smaller islands have been or are to be sold to private investors, e.g. the island of Poveglia (an old military outpost), S. Secondo (already sold) or Sacca Sessola, (the American’s “rose island”) and their future use will also be connected to tourism.

⁴⁹ City Council no. 198, dated 31st May 2017.

The Mission considers that all hotels already erected or to be erected considerably add to the tourism pressure, as every one of these significantly increases the number of day-tourists in the city of Venice. As this category of visitors is the most encumbering for the city, it is questionable to push any further infrastructure plans in this direction.

As far as private apartment rentals for tourists (managed through online platforms like 'Airbnb', 'Booking', 'Expedia' and other) and Bed and Breakfast (B&B) the problem lies with inadequate legal regulations. According to the Italian Constitution, it is the right of every citizen to rent out their private properties to other individuals. Additionally, the new regional regulation⁵⁰ provides bases for the liberalisation of tourist rentals.⁵¹ Its scope was to economically help some depressed areas of Veneto, especially in the Alpine areas. The effect for Venice was very negative and in fact led to the explosion of these short rentals. The new law does not classify tourist rentals as accommodation and therefore, as commercial activities, but as "accommodation facilities without the provision of services" and buildings intended for such a use remain classified as residential and not tourist use. This means that they must not require an official approval for the change of use of the housing unit (from residential to tourist) and do not need to present to the Municipality a 'Certified Start of Activity Notification'. Furthermore, there is no time limit such as it is imposed on the previous category of unclassified furnished accommodation units and the owner is not necessarily required to be a resident as is the case, for example, for the B&B activities. Other advantages concern the 21% reduce from taxation and the absence of any quality control. Not only private apartment rentals for tourists and B&Bs take advantage of this facilitated regime but also hotels that incorporate neighbouring houses or single apartments in order to enlarge their offer.

The complete liberalisation of private apartment rentals and B&Bs and their facilitated management through the online platforms has led to an explosion in short visit rentals after the approval of the regional law and has dramatically reduced the number of apartments for the residents.

As the competence for this matter on the one hand lies with the State (for regulation related to renting) on the other hand with the Veneto region (tourism strategies and management), the municipality currently has no legal basis to interdict or restrict private rentals. To monitor the situation, the municipality had created a digital, GIS based platform to a publicly open website where any citizen could check and see if the apartment used by tourists are registered. The registration and obtainment of an identification code are obligatory (special stickers should be put outside such places). A fee should be payed after each tourist staying overnight, and the citizens are controlling each other, as anonymous reporting possibility is provided. Fines could be issued if someone is not complying with the regulation. If the city has restricted possibilities to limit the number of apartments with short-period-rental, the solution to the problem must be sought at the State level. Consideration should be given to the fact whether the owner is living in the rented apartment as well, or if (regardless of the business model) the apartment is entirely rented out and thus has primarily an entrepreneurial use.

A long-term solution of the explosive growth of private rentals that is problematic for many other Italian cities, is likely to be solved in a political decision-making level. The related legal regulations should be revised, and more detailed and strict tools should be provided. It should not only restrict new private rentals, but also contain the possibility to put a reasonable restriction to the already operational commercial B&Bs.

⁵⁰ Veneto Region Law n.11 of 2013.

⁵¹ Regional Law n. 45/2014, which amends the Regional Law 11/2013, introducing paragraph 27 bis.

A further important initiative of the municipality is the interdiction of new bars and restaurants. Between 2001 and 2019, in fact, their number has increased from 583 to 1'453 and a limitation has become inevitable.⁵² Theoretically, existing establishments can be made bigger, but in the light of building restriction regarding for instance height of ceilings, in practice that will not happen in many cases.

The assessor of tourism also endeavours to have the tourist's behaviour adequate to the historic site. The campaign #EnjoyRespectVenice is present not only with advertisements on the squares of the city but is also with "urban stewards and hostesses" and on the web.

Recommendation 35

Stop building further hotels in the city of Venice without any exception.

Recommendation 36

Provide the municipalities with highest priority, an efficient legislative basis, permitting them the limitation or ban of new private rental places and B&Bs and reducing the existing ones. Subsequently, implement this regulation in an efficient way.

Recommendation 37

Maintain the limitation for creating new tourism infrastructure facilities, enhance the quality of the existing infrastructure and furthermore, strengthen the service infrastructure for residents' use.

5.5 Crowding-out of residents

The constant loss of residents is the other of the two main threats for the World Heritage property.

In the city of Venice, i.e. on the inner islands of the Lagoon⁵³, the number of residents is decreasing constantly. After World War II the city counted 175'000 inhabitants. In 2019 there were 52'000 left. Venice loses some 4% of its residents every year. This loss is in parallel to the growth of the population in Mestre, which has reached a population of some 180'000 in 2019. The two numbers easily explain why in political decisions the mainland-population has a decisive power of votes and easily overrules the interest of the city of Venice.

The reasons of this loss of residents are multiple. Some of them are linked to the specific geographical situation of a "city on the water". Indeed, for inhabitants, local public transport and access the Lagoon or the mainland, parking and maintaining their own car, etc. is complicated. Carrying home the daily shopping is tedious. Furthermore, as a tendency, life-cost is elevated, since, since goods must be reloaded several times all transportation is complicated. This kind of inconvenience cannot be changed. On the other hand, the Mission learned that the main reason for individuals to leave Venice are the extremely high expenses for buying or renting an apartment. This difficulty is closely linked to tourism and notably to the increasing number of hotels and of using private apartments as short-term tourist rentals in particular. With such a type of use the yield on a house can be essentially increased. The phenomenon is strengthened by the numerous apartments that are used as second residence.

⁵² Number of food and beverage activities open to the public, including bars and restaurants. *Comune di Venezia, Settore Commercio*.

⁵³ The official denomination of the central islands (San Marco, Castello, Sant'Elena, Cannaregio, Dorsoduro, Santa Croce, San Polo, Giudecca, Saccafisola) with "historical centre" (centro storico) is far away from the historical reality and its development.

A further difficulty for residents is the lack of adequate jobs outside of the tourism industry. To counter this fact, investments have been made by public and private actors to turn the city into an educational hub: Venice hosts the two universities Ca' Foscari University and the IUAV (*Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia*), the Venice Academy of Fine Arts and the Venice International University. While such cultural efforts certainly create jobs, the number of these in the creative sector are limited. On the other hand, jobs that are related to the public administration tend to be transferred from Venice to Mestre. The later issue generates a further problem, as the buildings of these administrations – often important palaces – are sold and privatised. However, the new owner does not seem to face serious restrictions with the change of use of these building. Therefore, the Mission considers that when such privatisations occur, the public tender should clearly specify that the furnishing of apartments for locals (for residential use or creating workplaces for qualified persons, especially in the form of small and medium enterprises) will be part of the contract. The problematic examples for selling publicly owned palaces without a rigorous definition of further use are numerous. The seller of these buildings is in many cases the *Cassa depositi e prestiti S.p.A.*, which came into possession of many buildings in the period when the Municipality of Venice has lost full control of this issue. Examples for these weakly controlled sales are palazzo Manfrin, Ex Carceri di S. Severo, Ex Casotto San Pietro, Palazzo Duodo, Palazzo Ziani, Palazzo Cassiano, Palazzo Gradenigo, Palazzo Diedo,. There is also an intention for selling further historic buildings like Palazzo Balbi, Palazzo Gussoni and Palazzo Ca' Nova (Dorsoduro). Currently, the local health authority is selling 32 real estates, and the Venice Region has no competence to control or restrict their future use, though this would be an important tool.⁵⁴

The "Mission found that the municipality is aware of the problem with the decrease of residents and had put forward efforts to develop mitigation measures. Public green spaces had been requalified (like the rehabilitation of the Royal Gardens next S. Marc square), play areas had been recovered and developed, the urban furnishing elements had been restored and enhanced, market areas had been upgraded and the temporary tourist kiosks had been banned or requalified in several areas. The limitation and regulation of the number of tourism infrastructure, including the limitation of rental places (private or commercial) for tourist overnight stays, the prohibition of new hotels and B&Bs, the renovation of publicly owned residential houses are positive initiatives as well.

However, the policies that have been implemented in order to stop or reduce Venice's depopulation and the consequent loss of identity and intangible cultural heritage have not yet reached their target, despite some success in the educational and cultural areas. Nevertheless, the current situation still reflects a continuous decrease in the number of residents, therefore these efforts do not seem to be sufficient.

The Mission is convinced that, in medium term, the decrease of population in Venice presents a fundamental threat for the city and the World Heritage property. It has to be repeated that the authenticity of a World Heritage property not only includes attributes like form and design or materials and substance. The Mission draws attention to the fact that the authenticity of a property also has eminent dimensions in intangible qualities such as use and function, traditions, techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling. These dimensions are called into question and eminently threatened by crowding-out inhabitants.

⁵⁴ „La Regione Veneto autorizza l'Ulss 3 Serenissima a mettere all'asta 32 beni immobiliari di proprietà, per un valore complessivo di 13,4 milioni di euro. I primi beni ad andare all'incanto saranno 22 appartamenti situati a Venezia...” (Communique 7th January 2020).

In relationship with the protection of locals, an equal statement is adequate for the integrity of a World Heritage property. It must meet the condition that it does not suffer from adverse effects of development and/or neglect. In the case of Venice, the enormous and ongoing decrease of the population in the last decades has been unrestrained; it suffers from the adverse effect of depopulation and risks to lose its functional integrity.

It is imperative to develop an efficient strategy to significantly increase the number of affordable apartments of people who constantly live on the islands. This strategy could include measures like increased public assistance to private homeowners for the restoration of residential buildings (on condition that they are rented out to locals), a municipal policy of purchasing residential buildings, the creation and support of housing cooperatives, the principle that all sales of publicly-owned buildings be subject to a contractual obligation to fit out apartments, maintenance and creation of qualified jobs. There are many possibilities, but, following a clear strategy is clearly necessary, which then must be implemented quickly and efficiently.

Recommendation 38

Ensure that efficient measures are developed and implemented in order to increase the number of residents in Venice and on the islands, in awareness that otherwise the authenticity and integrity of the property is thoroughly compromised, and the OUV and the attributes of the property is threatened.

5.6 Urban Infrastructure

Waste Collection and Urban Cleaning

Some years ago, Venice had a tremendous problem with waste. During night- and daytime, waste was deposited in the footways (*calli*), where it attracted birds and rats. With the preconditions of the town built on water, it was difficult to resolve this problem.

The Mission was shown the system of waste collection operated by the public company VERITAS, which belongs to the municipality of Venice. It works in a very efficient manner that is quite expensive, therefore, puts a financial burden on the residents. Inhabitants put the waste into small handcarts; residents that are not able to do so get a door-to-door service. Beside normal waste, depending on the day, plastics or paper are collected. The waste is transferred into boats adapted to the traffic in the small canals containing a twin container (waste and plastic/paper) and equipped with a compacting device. With an enormous crane, these boats are unloaded in Sacca San Biagio onto big vessels, which then carry the waste to the central deposit in Fusina.⁵⁵ The unsorted urban waste is treated in a "secondary solid fuel production plant"; whose production helps to replace hard coal at the Enel power plant in Fusina. Materials derived from separate collections (glass, plastics, metals, paper/cardboard) are sorted and valorised for recycling.

The company VERITAS is also responsible for cleaning all public spaces of the city, the squares, footways (*calli*) and quays, but also the water ways from thrown away waste. Manifestly, the system works well, and it is most gratifying to see the clean condition the city presents itself in.

The Mission is impressed by the newly functioning system of waste disposal. Compared to previous years, there has been a marked improvement in cleanliness. The Mission highly acknowledges this achievement of the Municipality and its company VERITAS.

⁵⁵ *Ecoprogetto Venezia srl.*

Construction of a comprehensive sewer-system

The Mission regrets that it was not presented with an overview of the sewer system currently in place nor with plans to modernize it for future needs of the city and other settlements on the lagoon and coastal islands fully compatible with EU Directives. The Mission considers that a sustainable kind of urban sewage treatment will have to be designed, which will be able to cope with the increasing environmental pressures observed. Besides the amount and the nature of household sewage produced by the settlements (including nano- and micropollutants, endocrine disruptors, etc.), these pressures notably include land-based sources increasingly polluting the Lagoon waters (agricultural and industrial run-offs), combined with reduced freshwater inflows into the Lagoon (due to river diversions and reduced river water flows) and the anticipated blocking of water exchanges between the Lagoon and the Sea during the periods of closure of the MoSE gates. These closures are likely to become much longer than initially planned due to the sea level rise, creating a higher frequency of high tides above 110 cm. An integrative sewage treatment plan would also have to take into account the opportunities and possibilities for water recycling, water purification in specially adapted reedbeds (*fitodepurazione*), possibly to be established in currently little used former fish farm polders (*valli*), and saltmarshes (*barene*), based on prior EIA studies.

Recommendation 39

Plan and progress with the installation of a modern and innovative urban sewer-system that fulfils the requirements of the relevant EU Directives, takes into account the Lagoon water flows with an ecosystem-based approach and prevent future pollution of the Lagoon waters through the release of untreated sewage.

6. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE LAGOON

The World Heritage property is adequately termed “Venice and its Lagoon”, as the historical and cultural values of Venice would not have evolved and provide the heritage they do without the surrounding Lagoon. The unique Lagoon ecosystem provides a safe environment for the urban citizen. In historic times it secured the Venice City State from enemy attacks. Since the first settlements in times, and still today, the Lagoon provides an important food basket for the urban citizen through its fishery products and the vegetable and fruit gardens on the Lagoon islands. The historic city and the settlements on the island in the Lagoon provide a unique tourist attracting of global reputation. Other tourist destinations try to copy this, but remain pale imitations compared to the original (“Venice of the North”, “Venice of the East” etc.). To provide safe and healthy living conditions for the citizen of Venice and its island settlements, it is important that the Lagoon waters remain sufficiently clean. Clean waters are the basis for food production, disease control and waste management. To this end, water purification through wetland vegetation and soils, pollutant resorption and waste recycling and reduction processes in the Lagoon ecosystem need to be maintained. The coastal strip between the Lagoon and the Adriatic Sea fulfils an important protective function against storms, floods, and effects of sea level rise. The equilibrium in the Lagoon between bottom sedimentation and erosion towards the Sea maintains the Lagoon as a brackish and productive waterbody. When erosion towards the Sea becomes dominant, the Lagoon turns into an open marine bay that provides less storm protection and food production.

Environmental and Morphological Plan, Climate Action Plan, Water Plan

While in the historical past, human interventions were diverting inflowing rivers and their sediments from the Lagoon, in order to avoid its silting up and potential closing off from the Sea, current developments are opposite: The Lagoon bottom sediments are eroding towards the Sea and the ecosystem has a tendency to evolve towards a marine bay, rather than maintaining a brackish lagoon ecosystem that functions i. a. as an important fish nursery. Large areas of the inner edges of the Lagoon have been turned in historical times into artificial polders (*valli*, mainly for fish farming and waterfowl hunting), decreasing many typical and species-rich transitional habitats such as saltmarshes, reed beds, freshwater meadows and riverine forests. Some projects have been undertaken, or are ongoing, to restore lost areas of saltmarshes (*barene*). This is commendable, also taking into account that saltmarshes are among the so-called “Blue Carbon” wetland habitats that have the potential to act as carbon sinks by storing atmospheric CO₂ taken up by their vegetation long-term in the peat soil underneath. Such nature-based long-term carbon sinks need to be maintained and restored and should be accounted for in Italy’s Nationally Determined Contributions to achieve the objectives of the Paris Accord under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Finding sustainable ways of managing the navigation channels, and in particular those dredged in the past century to allow deep-water navigation of large high sea ships, is currently the most urgent challenge. The size of the ships entering the Lagoon must be adopted to the carrying capacity of the unique lagoon ecosystem. It does not work the other way around, as the Lagoon ecosystem cannot be adapted to the ever-growing size and drought of modern oversized ships. The Mission was told that the Morphological Plan for the Lagoon is currently being updated and expects that this update will take these fundamental ecological rules into account. The Morphological Plan needs to become an operational instrument to monitor if the needed equilibrium between Lagoon bottom erosion and sedimentation is maintained in order to allow an optimal diversity of Lagoon ecosystem services to be provided to the Venetians, such as i.a. fish and food production, water purification, storm and flood protection, recreation and tourism support.

The Mission was also informed about a “sediment protocol”, a preparatory document for the definition of the Environmental and Morphological Plan. The sediment protocol (“*protocollo fanghi*”) regulates the maintenance of the canals through bottom sediment removal, specifying four aspects that need to be considered to avoid environmental and pollution risks. In order to curb and stop the erosion of the Lagoon bottom towards the Sea, any dredged sediments are to be moved only within the Lagoon, i.e. be deposited at specially prepared parts of the Lagoon in view of restoring degraded mudflats and saltmarshes. Special care needs to be taken when removing polluted sediments which need to be stored in special depollution areas where they can be treated. The Mission asks the authorities to submit this protocol to the World Heritage Centre. An updated version of it needs to become part of the updated Environmental and Morphological Plan.⁵⁶

The Mission was provided with synthetic presentation about progress with the elaboration of the Climate Action Plan for Venice and its Lagoon. It notes with satisfaction that a general programme to raise awareness has started and has created first results. It also notes that a general programme to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, notably in the public transport sector on land, has started. Risks linked to the changing climate (sea level rise, increased frequency of floods, increased drought periods in summer) are becoming widely known and first efforts to respond to them through adaptation and mitigation programmes planned and implemented in an inter-sectoral way are undertaken. First vulnerability assessments were sketched out on territorial plans. The Mission notes with appreciation the efforts undertaken to conserve the coastal dunes, restore their vegetation and their storm water breaking services along the Pellestrina land belt, notably with financial support by the EU (LIFE programme). It also recommends to expand the successful saltmarsh restoration demonstration projects (LIFE, Seresto, Vimine) into a territorially much larger and more ambitious programme to restore larger areas of the lost saltmarshes and to restore lagoon sedimentation facilities and long-term carbon sinks, and to support biodiversity redevelopment on formerly degraded habitats. However, the Mission believes that the Climate Action Plan has now to enter its next phase with the definition of clear objectives and time-bound targets that can realistically be reached. This has become an urgency, given the fact that the frequency of high floods stemming from the tidal waves in the North of the Adriatic Sea has increased dramatically since 1990, exceeding largely the assumptions made when the current approach to protect Venice from high floods (with the MoSE flood gates) was started to be implemented.

The Mission was also looking at the Water Plan of the Commune of Venice, even though it was not specifically presented during the Mission. This plan covers a large part of the Lagoon, but not the entire Lagoon. Coordination with respective plans of the other municipalities have a share of the Lagoon is therefore crucial. The Plan details drinking and sewage water management infrastructure and states general principles. The Mission stresses the need that this management needs to take into account the above explained fundamental principles of the Lagoon ecosystem functioning, and by doing so, needs to fully conform with relevant water management and environmental Directives of the European Union. An interesting pilot project to this end is the LIFE project along the Sile river and in adjacent polders (*valli*) to reduce the increasing pollutants load in the Lagoon waters and sediments.

Recommendation 40

Submit to the World Heritage Centre for review the Environmental and Morphological Plan for the Lagoon when updated, including the updated

⁵⁶ The document is currently under discussion at the relevant ministerial level.

sediment-protocol (protocollo fanghi) and an overview of the current and planned dredging activities in the navigation canals in the Lagoon.

Recommendation 41

Submit to the World Heritage Committee for review the completed Climate Action Plan.

Recommendation 42

Develop a pilot project related to monitoring and mitigating negative impacts in relation to Climate Change, for sharing with site managers of other World Heritage properties, furthermore, to cooperate and exchange information with them.

The impact of traffic in the Lagoon and 'moto ondosò'

The Mission was impressed by the demonstration of the new surveillance cameras along the *Canal Grande* that allow to monitor the speed of each moving vessel and its identity. This enables the authorities to track any boat that moves faster than the maximum speed allowed in the most densely used waterways. The Mission strongly requests that this system be used to support the regular fining of the responsible drivers, including those of professional vessels (*vaporetti, motoscafi, taxi boats, etc.*).

Making sure that the speed limits are adhered to by all boats and also the larger ships, is the first step towards curbing the negative effects of wave actions to the banks of the canals, foundations of buildings and constructions, and to the natural shorelines of islands and saltmarshes in the Lagoon. The Mission was not presented with any up-to-date inventory of the damage created by wave action as a consequence of rapid navigation. It therefore assumes that the situation has not worsened since 2015. However, the Mission insists that such damage be continued to be monitored, at least in a semi-quantitative way, and that implementing existing speed limits through widespread fines is an urgent need for implementation, in order to obtain a widespread compliance with the speed limits.

The Mission welcomes the idea that vessels circulating in the Lagoon should, either only use low carbon emitting fuels, or run on electricity, possibly created with solar photovoltaic panels. Any further degradation of embankments constructed foundations and natural island borders needs to be monitored, in order to be able to take restorative and compensatory actions rapidly, and to prevent further degradation by reducing or completely eliminating relevant wave action where needed.

Recommendation 43

Monitor structural damage created by boat waves, and use the new camera surveillance system as a tool to enforce the speed limits, and to maintain the requirement for the use of low-emission fuel by ships circulating in the Lagoon, and encourage the use of no-emission (electric) boats.

Air pollution

The Mission was informed that the new smart control room will also be able to monitor air pollution with regard to national and regional regulations at specific places, notably in relation to road traffic. This concerns only a very limited part of the historical city. The Mission therefore suggests that more monitoring devices be added at crucial places, notably along Canal Grande, to monitor air pollution created by public and private ships and boats, especially in places with high water traffic in the historic city, put possibly also at specific parts of the Lagoon channels (e.g. Giudecca and San Marco basin, Lagoon inlets). This particularly relevant as, unlikely than the restrictions

imposed to road traffic, no comparable pollution reduction rules exist for water transport using heavily polluting fuels and few exhaust filters.

Environmental projects for mitigation in the Lagoon

The Mission notes with satisfaction the ongoing projects to restore specific degraded Lagoon habitats, such as the coastal dunes, saltmarshes, wet meadows, and riverine forests in the parts of the Lagoon closest to the freshwater river inlets. The Mission regrets that no overview of such mitigation and restoration projects was provided and suggests strongly to establish a map covering the entire property/Lagoon, identifying the respective areas in need of specific restoration/mitigation measures. Such a planning overview should specify the nature of the mitigation measures needed and their particular objectives, specifically for each locality.

Recommendation 44

Prepare an overview of ongoing and planned pilot projects for the restoration of specific ecosystems related to the Lagoon, and use the lessons learnt with these demonstration projects to develop more detailed environmental restoration policies and plans.

Potential threats for nature in the Lagoon

The Venice Lagoon (550km²) is a unique ecosystem, based on its natural heritage and complemented by its long history of human uses. With the increasing pressures imposed by human developments in the 21st century, the threats to the functioning of the ecosystem and the natural solutions and services it provides to the Venetians are growing rather than diminishing. The human pressures need therefore to be monitored carefully, in order to avoid major disasters.

The water quality, and with it the capacity to provide fishery products, depends on the Lagoon hydrology, i.e. optimal water exchanges between inflowing freshwater from landward rivers, and regular tidal exchanges of the brackish Lagoon waters with the Adriatic Sea. Modifying the openings between the Lagoon and the Sea, as done by the MoSE floodgates infrastructure, may impact such exchanges significantly. Monitoring of biodiversity, of primary and secondary production (including fisheries), water fluxes and water quality is therefore a priority, in order to be able to elaborate functional ecosystem models for the Lagoon that can be used as a tool to forecast, with sufficient adequacy, developments of the functioning of the Lagoon ecosystem.

Water pollution remains a significant real and potential threat. Increasing eutrophication through untreated urban sewage, but also point-source or diffuse pollution through inflow of nutrients (from inland agricultural areas) or toxic substances (from the industrial and agricultural areas at the Lagoon edge) are a threat that needs to be carefully monitored in order to avoid degradation of the Lagoon. Pollution through navigation accidents, notably between the Adriatic Sea and the Marghera harbour and industrial facilities pose a potential threat with unimaginable consequences for Venice and its Lagoon. In the long term, all large-scale industrial activities should therefore be moved outside of the World Heritage property.

With increasing seawater levels, droughts and temperatures, eutrophication of the Lagoon water quality, with summer algal blooms, spread of botulism and anaerobic crises are a real threat that may occur more frequently than in the past. Such disasters will have sizeable economic consequences for many primary users of the Lagoon, including fishermen, hunters, and tourists.

The Lagoon morphology and its sheer existence depends on a long-term balance of sediment transport, deposition, and erosion. Currently, the Lagoon is likely in a state of erosion that will eventually turn it into a shallow marine bay of a completely different

ecosystem type. This has a high potential to provide a final blow to current Lagoon fisheries and specific forms of recreation, such as waterfowl hunting, angling, and leisure boat traffic.

A coherent and integrative understanding of the Lagoon ecosystem functioning, and dynamics is essential to be able to intervene in situations of unfavourable developments and environmental disasters. In order to draw up efficient mitigation and reparation measures to be put in place in case of ecological disasters and pollution incidents, it is necessary to dispose of sufficient and adequate monitoring data compiled at regular intervals and in all significant parts of the Lagoon.

Recommendation 45

Continue the restoration programmes for different ecosystems in the Lagoon and along its borders, such as saltmarshes (barene), coastal dunes, wet meadows, and riverine forests. Furthermore, continue the monitoring programme for the Lagoon established in relation with the MoSE floodgates including monitoring the water quality and the sources of its pollution.

7. THE “AQUA GRANDA” OF NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2019

Floods in Venice (*acqua alta* or, in Venetian, *acqua granda*) are the result of several natural phenomena, particularly high tide, low air pressure and the *Scirocco* wind, pushing the water into the Venice Lagoon. Normally, forecast of the flood level based on numerous deterministic and statistical models functions well and the citizens and institutions are adequately warned.

During the night of 12th to 13th November 2019, Venice was the victim of a violent and dramatic sea storm that caused huge damage to private property and to the artistic and cultural heritage. In addition to the forecasted elements of the flood, a cyclone formed on the Adriatic Sea entered the Lagoon, stayed near San Marco and caused an important surplus of water level and heavy waves. Water level reached a height of 187 cm above the average water level of the Lagoon.⁵⁷ Almost 90% of Venice was under water, the flood stayed for several days⁵⁸ causing extensive damage to private and public properties and goods. The city was close to collapse. Together with Venice also other islands and cities around the Lagoon were heavily affected. The government ordained a state of emergency in order to provide measures for emergency management and mitigation of damage.

The assessment of the damage was still ongoing during the time of the Mission, and no report was provided to UNESCO. Nevertheless, the Mission was presented with some preliminary information, especially that relates to the immovable cultural heritage of Venice. The information was presented by the Superintendence, which has an overall responsibility for damage assessment of historic buildings. More than eighty churches and ecclesiastical buildings in the historical centre of the town and other places on the Lagoon have been heavily damaged, from the bell tower of the church of San Donato in Murano to the mosaic floor of the church in Torcello. The church administration estimates high costs to even hold services again, but it will not be able to bear the expense. Special problems exist for the stability of clock towers; several of them have tilted sideways and it will be necessary not only to monitor them but also to stabilise some of them. The erosion of soil under the churches is worrisome and the erosion trend will continue and will lead to cracks of the floor and structural threats in general.

The mission had the possibility to visit St. Mark's Cathedral, where the crypta and the ground floor were flooded. Main damage is because of salt water and water pressure that affected the column bases, the mosaic floors, and some sculptures. It is to be noted that the last high tide event was only the second to fully penetrate the cathedral, which is at the lowest section of the city. This is due to the already existing special flood prevention mechanisms put forward in and around the cathedral and the Saint Mark square. To avoid this phenomenon to happen in the future, further special tide preventions barriers will be constructed in the near future. The restoration will cost at least € 3 million. As an example, for damage to the average size building, the Mission visited the Fondazione Querini-Stampaglia, which was deteriorated by the high tide, and its library collection was hit by the saltwater flood.

The Government is providing financial aid for mitigation the damage, and it already announced contribution for the restoration of church buildings. The € 20 million, available to the administration after the Italian government declared the city an emergency area, will not go far. According to first estimates⁵⁹, at least € 360 million will have to be spent for public buildings and facilities, piers, bridges, walls, floors,

⁵⁷ The highest ever registered, disastrous flood of 4th November 1966, reason for the construction of the MoSE, was only 7 cm higher.

⁵⁸ On Friday, 15th November, the water reached again 154 cm with 80 percent of Venice inundated, another peak of 150 cm above normal reached St. Mark's Square on 17th November.

⁵⁹ *Il Giornale dell'Arte*, 405, February 2020.

pavements, lighting fixtures and similar installations including state and municipal museums. The most urgent works alone will cost at least € 90 million. Furthermore, the authorities have declared that they will compensate damage to private property, for individuals with € 5'000 and companies with € 20'000; some nine thousand applications for compensation have been submitted and the corresponding total amount is currently around € 75 million. In addition to the immediately paid € 20 million, the Italian State has accorded another tranche of € 84 million in February 2020.⁶⁰

The Mission was informed that during the high tide hours and in the subsequent period, the citizens of Venice and the Lagoon were putting forward enormous efforts in a joint way to manage the situation and to salvage human lives and property. The Mission found Venice and the Lagoon (both the public and the private spaces) in a well-ordered and clean state, only some few weeks after the devastating flood. It bears witness to an immense effort of the private owners of buildings, restaurants, and shops. A great solidarity between residents was in evidence. Credit should also go to the municipality of Venice, which also made enormous efforts to help residents and to present a worthy image to the remaining tourists.

Recommendation 46

Provide adequate financial resources to restore and mitigate the damaging effect of the "aqua granda" of November-December 2019 to the OUV of the property and its attributes that convey the OUV, with special consideration of the damage caused to buildings of individuals, business owners and the patriarchy.

Action Plans for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

With the rising threats of Climate Change, it is predictable that the events of exceptional high tides will be increasing continuously. The 2015 mission in its report recommended: "A risk management strategy should be developed as a matter of urgency, including definition of all relevant rules and regulations."

Since October 2019, Venice has a revised "Integrated Plan of Interventions in Case of High and Low Tide" (*Piano integrato degli interventi in caso di alta e bassa marea*) at its disposal. The plan is divided into four sections. The first one reports and defines the references of the city, to create a common interpretative language among all stakeholders. The second section updates the plan of 2012, with details about the operations of the "Tide Forecasting and Reporting Centre of the City of Venice" (*Centro Previsione e Segnalazione Maree, CPSM*) – it is the most important body involved in case of high tide and has achieved a high degree of excellency. The third section describes the relations with the subjects involved and the interventions that the CPSM implements for each entity that subscribes to the document. The last section in turn defines the activities and the interventions of the subjects involved in case of high or low tide. The plan provides for the involvement of approximately thirty bodies, including museums, schools, hospitals, police and fire forces, public transport companies. A fundamental point is the communication to the residents by means of different alarm-systems, sirens, or text messages.

The main point of the Plan is the coordination between all those in the city who provide public emergency services, public safety, transport, management of public goods, museums, and schools. The widespread coordination between all these realities allows a reduction of the damage that a high tide provokes. However, it does not

⁶⁰ The money will be used for repair of public work (€ 37 million) and for indemnification of private persons and companies (€ 47'000).

prevent Venice from important or even exceptional high tides, as physical protection is also needed to achieve this goal.

Impacts of the flood event on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property

Considering the information provided by the Venetian authorities and the observations made during its visit, the Mission considers that the flood event in November 2019 should not be overestimated in terms of its influence on the OUV of the property. Penetration of salt water and direct water damage are the main consequential problems. In the long term, efflorescence caused by crystallizing salt on frescoes, tiles, and masonry as a result of rising damp has to be expected. Consequences for the stability of constructions can be important, e.g. on buildings like clock towers. The asportation of mud and dirt is an annoying but in the long-term negligible problem.

The islands of Venice and the Lagoon have experienced many high tides during past centuries, but it is to be noted that the frequency of flood events has increased considerably over the past hundred years, going from 5 to 70 in a decade. It is also to be noted that the ten highest floods ever recorded took place in the past 50 years. These facts make evident that the natural conditions are changing and that additional measures are necessary.

All floods have provoked damage on the whole of built structures, public infrastructure, buildings, embankments, but also on the saltmarshes (*barene*). These influences that are part of the conditions of the property and part of its OUV. Its condition has not significantly changed due to the last high tide. In its entirety, today, it is not the “*aqua granda*” of November 2019 that threatens the OUV of the property but rather the cumulative and complex impacts of the mass tourism and the constant decrease of population.

Recommendation 47

Share a preliminary report on the damage assessment with the World Heritage Committee through the Secretariat as soon as possible, and submit a detailed, comprehensive final report with special focus on informing about deterioration to the OUV of the property.

Experimental Electromechanical Module (MoSE)

After the exceptional flood of 1966, the awareness that the frequency and height of tides in the Venice Lagoon have significantly increased has grown. A series of interventions have been planned and executed towards the conservation of Venice and Chioggia as well as the safeguard of the Lagoon from high tides. So, in several critical points shore banquetts were raised and in other places donkey backs installed. Against critical voices that feared an important change in the Lagoon's ecological system, the huge project of the protection of the lagoon with four enormous movable barriers was decided by the Italian Government in 1996. Building works began in 2003 with important investments for the reinforcement of barrier islands. The construction of the huge mobile gates⁶¹ called MoSE (*Modulo Sperimentale Elettromeccanico* – Experimental Electromechanical Module) were developed. The aim was to hide the barriers when opened.⁶² The completion of the entire barrier-work was planned by 2014, but due to financial and legal problems, this date has been continuously

⁶¹ There are four gates for the three inlets.

⁶² However, the important concrete buildings for installations have an important visual impact.

postponed. The 2015 UNESCO/ICOMOS/Ramsar-mission was assured that it would be completed and operational by 2016.”⁶³

After a case of corruption, the Italian State stopped financing the execution of the project, and due to this situation, it was halted. Additionally, one of the contractors went bankrupt. Due to the above described situation, the MoSE, despite its quite advanced stage, was still not operational during the high tide of November 2019, which led to the huge economic and cultural damage that was caused. The damage caused by the “*aqua granda*” of November 2019 is in direct relationship with the non-functioning of the MoSE barrier.

The mission had the possibility to visit the project in its present stage, which is currently close to its finalization. According to the provided information, the system will be operational within 2020. The total cost of the project will be appr. € 5.5 billions.⁶⁴ The Mission was also informed that the breakwaters around Lido and Pellestrina were also reinforced to strengthen the infrastructure of the Lagoon against the high tides. Furthermore, most of the historic building in the Arsenal of Venice were refurbished or restored, to house the headquarters of the overall management of the MoSE.

As “normal” changes of the water level are important for the ecological balance within the Lagoon, MoSE will be closed only if a high tide is expected to go beyond ca. 1,10 m over the average level of the Lagoon.⁶⁵ A sophisticated system of weather forecast and signaling is in place and currently being tested for its further improvement. Currently the State Party is in the process to ensure that a team is established to manage MoSE. In the future, it will be essential to assure a regular maintenance of the entire work (MoSE and security of the lido). In addition, detailed monitoring of the environmental effects of the four large and deep openings and the operation of the MoSE will be necessary. It should not be excluded that adaptations or changes might be necessary. Such reactions may also be necessary considering on-going environmental developments arising from Climate Change, rising sea level, water and sediment flows.

The Mission notes that no other alternatives had been identified so far to efficiently handle the high tide events in Venice, and if the situation remains untreated, the frequent high tide events will cause constant tension, ongoing damage to the material substance and further crowding out of residents from Venice due to the economic and social damages.

The Mission was also informed that the former Water Authority (Magistrato delle Acque) was replaced by a new organization, called Public Works Authority (*Provveditorato delle opere pubbliche*). The new authority has not the competences, the power, and the independence of the former authority. The Mission considers that an independent technical authority with technical and scientific expertise and independent and superordinate position for the management of the Lagoon and its drainage basin is indispensable; its competence should include the management of MoSE as well. As the Lagoon is not primarily an infrastructural, but a cultural and environmental asset, the resituated Water Authority should not solely be related to the Ministry of Infrastructure, but to the Ministries of the Environment and Cultural Heritage. This authority should be enabled to monitor all aspects of the Lagoon and its drainage basin. Especially, it should be assigned to monitor the effects of manmade influence to the Lagoon, e.g. the effects of the MoSE or the consequences of digging canals.

⁶³ Source: State Party state of conservation report

⁶⁴ MoSE barriers, reinforcement-work of the lido, restoration of the Arsenale.

⁶⁵ Currently the mobile gates are only foreseen to be closed for the few days of high tides per year. Nevertheless, this issue requires continuous monitoring.

In relation to its physical characteristics, the Mission considers that the mobile barriers of the MoSE system has no impact on the cultural values of property, nevertheless, the service buildings and ancillary concrete constructions at the three gate areas between the sea and the Lagoon, have an important visual impact that could be considered adverse to the OUV of the property (The impacts of the MoSE in relation to the environmental attributes are described in the following sub chapter.)

Recommendations 48

Create a balance between the positive and negative impacts of the MoSE following the full operationalisation of the system, by constant monitoring and understanding the impacts in more details, and by developing proper mitigation measures.

Recommendation 49

Review the governance related to water management of the Lagoon and its drainage basin and reconsider the designation of the responsible water authority.

Potential threats for nature in relation to the MoSE system

The artificial floodgate system MoSE for closing the three main Lagoon inlets is still under construction in 2020, even though the Mission was told in 2015 that it would be operational within a further year, i.e. in 2016/17. Unfortunately, the Mission in 2020 was not provided with the results of tests undertaken to verify that the floodgates are able to correctly close the Lagoon inlets and that they can withhold the flood wave from the sea. Without convincing results from such tests, under real flood conditions, it is impossible to dispel the remaining doubts about the effectiveness of a system that is still under construction. The urgency to have the system operational has increased since the extremely high floods of November 2019. This would have been an opportunity for it to pass a truly major test.

The Mission wishes to reiterate its observation of 2015, stating that a sophisticated Lagoon monitoring and tide forecasting system (including factors such as wind and precipitation, river water inflow) was operational. The Mission underlines the continuing need, as a compensation measure for the heavy modification (in the sense of the EU Water Framework Directive) of the Lagoon inlets and large stretches of the shoreline (along the Lido and different lagoon islands), to restore saltmarsh and other ecosystems through the deposition of materials dredged at other places of the Lagoon. Full saltmarsh ecosystem restoration is a time-consuming process and will need many years before fully satisfactory assessments of the reconstitution of fully functional ecosystems can be established.

The Mission notes in 2020 with concern information received, stating that the maintenance of the floodgates may not be undertaken at a sufficiently elevated level and frequency as originally planned.

With the overall Lagoon monitoring system in place, it will be possible to monitor the ecological effects of closing off the Lagoon for specific periods. More detailed monitoring programmes regarding the fauna, including commercially interesting species of fish and shellfish, will be needed to this end. This will allow large-scale real situation experiments of such temporary de-connections of the Lagoon from the sea.

The Mission in 2020 was provided with data showing that the ongoing sea level rise, reinforced by the subsidence of many islands, due to the missing entrance of river sediments into the Lagoon and the constant loss of sediments towards the open sea, makes it highly likely that the closed period of the floodgates will need to become more frequent and of longer duration, in order to prevent more frequent and larger high tides, above 110 cm, flooding lower parts of Venice and related low lying island

parts. With longer closure times, excluding any significant water flux between the Lagoon and the Sea, ecological problems may rise disproportionately. This may prevent the operators from closing the Lagoon sufficiently long to avoid any flooding of lower build up parts of Venice and its islands. In other words: an increasing number of specialists question the eventual effectiveness of the MoSE floodgates. Only careful testing and monitoring will provide convincing answers to these questions. Therefore, the Mission retains its recommendations already expressed in 2015:

Recommendation 50

Operate the system of artificial flood gates (MoSE) and its related Lagoon monitoring system in a way that it allows clear reactions and modifications based on regular monitoring of key indicators of the Lagoon ecosystems and its biodiversity and the beneficial effects on the constructed heritage of Venice (through flood alleviation). Use the functioning of the system as a large-scale experiment to learn lessons, also for settlements in other lagoons, and to constantly improve the system and its operation. With changes likely occurring as a consequence of a changing climate (sea level rise) and intensifying land-use (sediment reduction, bottom erosion, water quality deterioration), find additional solutions to the flood gates to prevent further flood damage to the cultural heritage of Venice.

8. LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Recognise the specificities of the property and systematically revise the national and regional regulations in order to provide possibility for exemption from all relevant ones accordingly. Provide room for the regional and local authorities to prepare specific legal tools or adjust the national and regional regulations to the need of the property, to provide bases for its suitable management.

Recommendation 2

Develop a shared vision for protecting the OUV of the property and ensure its transmission to future generations, furthermore, update and align the existing Road Map with this shared vision and develop an appropriate Action Plan (or Actions Plans if appropriate), related to the identification and mitigation of major threats to the property and its OUV as requested by the World Heritage Committee, and submit these in a draft form before final approval to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. Continue developing Master Plans defining and regulating specific issues for enhancing the protection of the OUV of the property.

Recommendation 3

Revise the governance of the property, especially the designation and mandate of the responsible site management, to enable more autonomous and empowered decision making and actions.

Recommendation 4

Reconsider the role of the Steering Committee, as this platform should act in a more proactive and cross cutting manner, developing overall visions, strategies and policies for the property, which then could be transmitted and discussed with the Interministerial Committee that has the power to designate projects and allocate financial sources for their implementation.

Recommendation 5

Ensure that the protection of the OUV of the property is harmonised on the local, supralocal, regional and national level. Provide a platform for discussing and mediating conflicts in an effective and result-based way.

Recommendation 6

Establish a participatory governance approach for the management of the property and in the main decision-making processes that have a strategic importance. Involve residents, civil associations, and through awareness raising tools visitors as well in the site management.

Recommendation 7

Provide means to the site management body in order to enhance the level of its involvement with all the stakeholders, including residents and civil associations, and enable the overall coordination power over the protection and management of the property, as well as its monitoring.

Recommendation 8

Develop adequate procedures for coordination and decision-making between the bodies involved in the management of the property and evaluate and assess sectorial needs and priorities.

Recommendation 9

Ensure that the updated Management Plan becomes a living document, which is based on a shared vision by authorities and stakeholders and is developed

in a transparent and inclusive way and available for all stakeholders, including residents, associations and non-governmental organisations. Ensure that the document serves as an integrated plan for the whole property and its planned buffer zone, which guides all responsible bodies and stakeholders, and provides them with detailed Road Map and indicators for measurable benchmarks in order to protect the OUV of the property.

Recommendation 10

Ensure that the updated Management Plan is based on a systematic value assessment (including the identification and mapping of attributes that convey the OUV of the property) and accompanied by short- and medium-term Action Plans, including roadmaps and its measurable benchmarks.

Recommendation 11

Ensure that the monitoring of the property is part of the management system and the Management Plan. The key indicators should be identified to measure and assess the state of conservation of the property, the factors affecting it, conservation measures at the property, the periodicity of their examination, and the identity of the responsible authorities.

Recommendation 12

Develop a specific monitoring system for vulnerability of heritage areas to Climate Change and strengthen the existing monitoring for disaster risk. Ensure that the updated Management Plan includes an integrated approach for disaster, Climate Change, and other risk preparedness, as well as training strategies for the responsible bodies and stakeholders.

Recommendation 13

Revise the overall management system of the property in the process of updating the Management Plan, in order to ensure that a sustainable development approach is followed, and the coordinated management of the proposed buffer zone is integrated into the management system.

Recommendation 14

Ensure that the delineation of the planned buffer zone is not limited by administrative zoning or sectorial territorial designations but be based on the assessment of values related to the OUV of the property.

Recommendation 15

Develop an assessment process that would allow the site management body and the relevant authorities to comply with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. Notify planned changes (major restoration or new construction projects) which may affect the OUV of the property to the World Heritage Committee through the World Heritage Centre as soon as possible and before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse.

Recommendation 16

Develop adequate processes that will allow the relevant authorities to fully comply with Paragraph 118bis. of the Operational Guidelines, which request for States Parties to ensure that Environmental Impact Assessments, Heritage Impact Assessments, and/or Strategic Environmental Assessments be carried out as a pre-requisite for development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the World Heritage property.

Recommendation 17

Provide adequate funding to the Municipality of Venice and the further stakeholders in accordance with the current version of the Special Law for

Venice for installing and maintaining urban infrastructure and the public and private real estate owners to restore the historic architecture of the city.

Recommendation 18

Revise the Special Law for Venice, including fully the fact of the inscription of "Venice and its Lagoon" (with the planned buffer Zone) on the World Heritage List and clearly defining the consequential obligations.

Recommendation 19

Submit all projects for new urban equipment to a competitive procedure in order to obtain a high urban and architectural quality.

Recommendation 20

Develop and share with the World Heritage Committee through the Secretariat a clear strategy on the rehabilitation, improvement and future uses of the Marghera area, in line with the Road Map and Action Plan, as well as with the 2015 World Heritage and Sustainable Development Policy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Recommendation 21

As in the current political municipal system, the mainland areas are managed together with Venice and the habitable islands/peninsulas in the Lagoon, ensure that all changes and development projects of these areas follow a joint management strategy that ensures the preservation and protection of the World Heritage property and its OUV.

Recommendation 22

Halt any construction overtopping the average maximum height of the existing townscape and ensure that no further permit for buildings exceeding the average maximum height of the existing built fabric be issued in the setting and the planned buffer zone of the World Heritage property prior to the establishment of an Integrated Master Plan for construction projects within the property and its future buffer zone with a clear concept in relation to a Tall Building/Skyline Policy with maximum heights.

Recommendation 23

Ensure that the permit for operating the storage-facility for petroleum products in Chioggia be rejected, the plant that presents an important threat to the OUV be dismantled and moved into an alternative location, preferably outside the property's boundaries. In case the relocation is planned within the property or its setting, an EIA and HIA be conducted prior to taking final decision about its location, and the plans be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies.

Recommendation 24

Segment out as much of the traffic as possible of the Venice Marco Polo Airport to other airports in the region. On a longer term, the Airport be significantly reduced in its activity and the number of aircraft movements.

Recommendation 25

Ensure that efficient communication is maintained with the World Heritage Centre and that the concerns and information of third parties submitted to the World Heritage Centre and then transmitted for verification and comments by the Secretariat, are answered within a short time and in adequate details.

Recommendation 26

Ensure that by the end of 2020, cruise ships over 40,000 gross register tons be directed to a provisional terminal in the port of Marghera as a temporary

solution, and search for solutions to ban the cruise ships from the Lagoon altogether.

Recommendation 27

Limit cruise ships allowed to pass within the San Marco basin and the Giudecca canal to a maximum of 40,000 gross register tons.

Recommendation 28

Develop an integrated Lagoon water and sediment flow model as soon as possible.

Recommendation 29

Use the Lagoon water flow and sediment transport model as a basis to take management decisions in order to avoid Lagoon bed erosion towards the Sea and clarify the related limits and restrictions for navigation waterway dredging and sediment relocation.

Recommendation 30

Based on the Lagoon water flow and sediment transport model, clarify the maximum size of ships that would be allowed to enter the Lagoon without the need for deeper waterway channel dredging.

Recommendation 31

Develop in the near future a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the relocation of the Marittima passenger terminal, as well as the Marghera large ship harbour facilities outside of the Lagoon.

Recommendation 32

Develop adequate measures to substantially reduce the number of tourists, aware that otherwise the authenticity and integrity of the property is considerably compromised, and its OUV threatened.

Recommendation 33

Use and implement the UNESCO Sustainable Tourism Toolkit. Enhance the sustainable tourism management tools for mass tourism pressure related to the property with data and experience obtained from the operation of the Smart Control Room, to ensure the long-term protection and preservation of its OUV.

Recommendation 34

Develop pilot projects related to the management of mass tourism for sharing with site managers of other World Heritage properties, furthermore, cooperate and exchange information with them.

Recommendation 35

Stop building further hotels in the city of Venice without any exception.

Recommendation 36

Provide the municipalities with highest priority, an efficient legislative basis, permitting them the limitation or ban of new private rental places and B&Bs and reducing the existing ones. Subsequently, implement this regulation in an efficient way.

Recommendation 37

Maintain the limitation for creating new tourism infrastructure facilities, enhance the quality of the existing infrastructure and furthermore, strengthen the service infrastructure for residents' use.

Recommendation 38

Ensure that efficient measures are developed and implemented in order to increase the number of residents in Venice and on the islands, in awareness that otherwise the authenticity and integrity of the property is thoroughly compromised, and the OUV and the attributes of the property is threatened.

Recommendation 39

Plan and progress with the installation of a modern and innovative urban sewer-system that fulfils the requirements of the relevant EU Directives, takes into account the Lagoon water flows with an ecosystem-based approach and prevent future pollution of the Lagoon waters through the release of untreated sewage.

Recommendation 40

Submit to the World Heritage Centre for review the Environmental and Morphological Plan for the Lagoon when updated, including the updated sediment-protocol (protocollo fanghi) and an overview of the current and planned dredging activities in the navigation canals in the Lagoon.

Recommendation 41

Submit to the World Heritage Committee for review the completed Climate Action Plan.

Recommendation 42

Develop a pilot project related to monitoring and mitigating negative impacts in relation to Climate Change, for sharing with site managers of other World Heritage properties, furthermore, to cooperate and exchange information with them.

Recommendation 43

Monitor structural damage created by boat waves, and use the new camera surveillance system as a tool to enforce the speed limits, and to maintain the requirement for the use of low-emission fuel by ships circulating in the Lagoon, and encourage the use of no-emission (electric) boats.

Recommendation 44

Prepare an overview of ongoing and planned pilot projects for the restoration of specific ecosystems related to the Lagoon, and use the lessons learnt with these demonstration projects to develop more detailed environmental restoration policies and plans.

Recommendation 45

Continue the restoration programmes for different ecosystems in the Lagoon and along its borders, such as saltmarshes (barene), coastal dunes, wet meadows, and riverine forests. Furthermore, continue the monitoring programme for the Lagoon established in relation with the MoSE floodgates including monitoring the water quality and the sources of its pollution.

Recommendation 46

Provide adequate financial resources to restore and mitigate the damaging effect of the "aqua granda" of November-December 2019 to the OUV of the property and its attributes that convey the OUV, with special consideration of the damage caused to buildings of individuals, business owners and the patriarchy.

Recommendation 47

Share a preliminary report on the damage assessment with the World Heritage Committee through the Secretariat as soon as possible, and submit a detailed,

comprehensive final report with special focus on informing about deterioration to the OUV of the property.

Recommendations 48

Create a balance between the positive and negative impacts of the MoSE following the full operationalisation of the system, by constant monitoring and understanding the impacts in more details, and by developing proper mitigation measures.

Recommendation 49

Review the governance related to water management of the Lagoon and its drainage basin and reconsider the designation of the responsible water authority.

Recommendation 50

Operate the system of artificial flood gates (MoSE) and its related Lagoon monitoring system in a way that it allows clear reactions and modifications based on regular monitoring of key indicators of the Lagoon ecosystems and its biodiversity and the beneficial effects on the constructed heritage of Venice (through flood alleviation). Use the functioning of the system as a large-scale experiment to learn lessons, also for settlements in other lagoons, and to constantly improve the system and its operation. With changes likely occurring as a consequence of a changing climate (sea level rise) and intensifying land-use (sediment reduction, bottom erosion, water quality deterioration), find additional solutions to the flood gates to prevent further flood damage to the cultural heritage of Venice.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. Inscription history

The World Heritage property 'Venice and its Lagoon' was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987 (at the 11th Session of the World Heritage Committee). According to the Committee **Decision 11COM VIIA**, the property met all the culture criteria: i, ii, iii, iv, v and vi.

Venice was at the focus of international attention following the exceptional flooding of 4 November 1966. International aid (including financial contributions for many decades) were provided to restore the damages and preserve the site.

Inscription criteria and World Heritage values as formulated by ICOMOS⁶⁶

RECOMMENDATION:

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi.

JUSTIFICATION:

The nomination of Venice to the list preceded by nine years the ratification of the World Heritage Convention by Italy. There was some concern about such a delay, which international opinion deemed inexplicable: on several occasions, notably during the discussions which preceded the elaboration of the tentative lists, the Committee expressed the wish for a shortlist presentation of the most prestigious cultural properties and cited how paradoxical it was that Venice had not been included on the World Heritage List.

The initiative finally taken by the Italian government responds to this general expectation, and this is all the more positive in that the nomination concerns not only the historic centre of Venice, but the whole lagoon with its hundreds of small islands, its three openings to the Adriatic Sea, the Lido, Malamocco and Chioggia; its basins and fishing areas. The geographic, historic and aesthetic coherency of this ensemble leaves no doubt.

In this lagoon covering 50,000 ha, nature and history have been so closely linked since the 5th century A.D. when Venetian populations, to escape Barbarian raids, found refuge on the sandy islands of Torcello, Iesolo and Malamocco. These temporary settlements gradually became permanent and the initial refuge of the land-dwelling peasants and fishermen became a maritime power. Several key dates stand in the minds of all: the small island of Rialto was chosen as the headquarters of the new city; in 1000 A.D., Venice controlled the Dalmatian coast; in 1112, a trading market was founded in Sidon; in 1204 Venice allied with the Crusaders to capture Constantinople. The abundant booty brought back on that occasion, including St. Mark's horses, is only the more spectacular part of the loot from Byzantium that the doge Enrico Dandolo shared with his allies. Under the doge a maritime empire of

⁶⁶ Advisory Body Evaluation (ICOMOS), 1987 <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/documents/>

unequaled power extended over the entire length of shores along the eastern Mediterranean, to the islands of the Ionian Sea, and to Crete.

During the entire period of the expansion of Venice, over the centuries when it defended its trading markets against the business undertakings of the Arabs, the Genoese and the Ottomans, and those of the European monarchs who were envious of its power, Venice never ceased, in the literal sense of the term, to consolidate its position in the lagoon. The marriage with the sea, that "sposalizio" that since 1172 was symbolized by the ring of the doge, who had replaced the dux (elected for the first time in 697 by an assembly of the people was never called into question. Defense of the site in the face of major dangers, siltings and the destructive assault of the waters' waves, was a matter of constant concern. From the High Middle Ages to the 18th century, the course of the rivers' waters was deviated and controlled

the three channels through which the tide engulfs the lagoon have continuously been rearranged; the thin strip of shore has been protected by fences, stone piles and breakwaters. By the time completion was achieved in 1782 of the fantastic construction of the murazzi, a veritable dam holding back the Adriatic, the Most Serene Republic would survive only 15 years longer.

In this inland sea which has continuously been under threat, rises amidst a tiny archipelago at the very edge of the waves, one of the most extraordinary built-up areas of the Middle Ages. From Torcello to the north to Chioggia to the south, every small island, or nearly, had its own settlement, town, fishing village and artisan village (e.g., Murano, Burano), but at the heart of the lagoon, Venice stood as one of the greatest capitals in the medieval world. When a group of tiny islands were consolidated, nothing remained of the primitive topography but canals such as Giudecca Canal, St. Mark's Canal and the Great Canal (according to Comynnes, "the most beautiful street in the world"), and a network of small canals (*rii*) that are the veritable arteries of a city on water. In this unreal space, where there is no notion of the concept of terra firma, masterpieces of one of the most extraordinary architectural museums on earth have been accumulated for over 1,000 years. The least palazzetto, which in Venice seems only a minor construction, would constitute the glory of many historic cities.

Everyone is familiar with the dangers threatening the inestimable heritage of Venice: changes in ground level and tides, atmospheric pollution and socio-economic changes are some of the direct or indirect consequences of the industrialization of the zone of Mestre. These factors have posed, in new terms, the problem of the survival of Venice. The action of the Council of Europe, UNESCO, and of many non-governmental organizations on behalf of Venice has shown the reality of international solidarity which only great causes bring to the forefront.

Without summarizing all the actions undertaken following the flooding of 4 November 1966, ICOMOS stresses that the inclusion of Venice on the World Heritage List will further strengthen the coherency of the cultural policy of UNESCO. Venice meets all the criteria for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

-Criterion I. Venice is a unique artistic achievement. The city is built on 118 small islands and seems to float on the waters of the lagoon, composing an unforgettable landscape whose imponderable beauty inspired Canaletto, Guardi, Turner and many other painters. The city reveals itself instantly. The lagoon of Venice also includes one

of the highest concentrations of masterpieces in the world: from Torcello Cathedral to the church of St. Mary of Salvation, all the centuries of an extraordinary Golden Age are represented by monuments of exceptional beauty: San Marco, the Palazzo Ducale, Zanipolo and Scuola di San Marco, the Grari and Scuola di San Rocco, San Giorgio Maggiore, etc.

-Criterion II. The influence of Venice on the development of architecture and monumental arts has been considerable. It first made its impact in all the trading markets and stations of the Most Serene Republic along the shores of Dalmatia, in Asia Minor and in Egypt, in the islands of Ionian Sea, in Euboea, in Peloponnesus, in Crete, and in Cyprus, where the monuments built were inspired by Venetian models. But at the time when this empire of the seas experienced its first defeats, Venice founded a school of a very different type, thanks to its painters. Bellini and Giorgione, then Titien, Tintoret, Veronese and Tiepolo so profoundly changed the perception of space, light and colour that they made a decisive mark on trends in painting and decoration in Europe.

-Criterion III. With the unusualness of an archaeological site which still breathes life, Venice bears testimony unto itself. This mistress of the seas is a link between the East and the West, between Islam and Christianity; she lives on through thousands of monuments and vestiges of a time gone by.

-Criterion IV. Venice possesses an incomparable series of architectural ensembles illustrating the age of its splendour. From great monuments such as Piazza San Marco and Piazzetta (the cathedral, the Palazzo Ducale, Marciana, Correr Museum, Procuratie Vecchie), to the more modest residences of calli and campi in its six quarters (Sestieri), and including hospitals and charitable or cooperative institutions which in the 13th century were originally Scuole, medieval Venetian architecture presents a complete typology whose exemplary value goes hand-in-hand with the outstanding character of an urban setting which had to adapt to the special requirements of the site.

-Criterion V. In the Mediterranean area, the lagoon of Venice constitutes an outstanding example of a semi-lake settlement which has become vulnerable as a result of irreversible changes. In this coherent ecosystem where the bareness, muddy ground which alternately sinks below water level and then rises again, are as important as the islands, the houses standing on piles, the fishing villages, and the rice-fields need as much protection as the palaces and the churches.

-Criterion VI. Venice symbolizes the victorious struggle of mankind against the elements, and the mastery men and women have imposed upon hostile nature. The city is also directly and tangibly associated with universal history. The "Queen of the Seas," heroically gripping to her tiny islands, did not limit her horizon, either to the lagoon, or to the Adriatic, or to the Mediterranean. It was from Venice that Marco Polo (1254-1324) set out in search of China, Annam, Tonkin, Sumatra, India and Persia. His tomb at San Lorenzo recalls the role assumed by Venetian merchants in the discovery of the world- after the Arabs, but well before the Portuguese.

ANNEX 2. Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the World Heritage property "Venice and its Lagoon" was adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013) by **Decision 37 COM 8E**⁶⁷.

Outstanding Universal Value⁶⁸

Brief synthesis

The UNESCO World Heritage property comprises the city of Venice and its lagoon situated in the Veneto Region of Northeast Italy. Founded in the 5th century AD and spread over 118 small islands, Venice became a major maritime power in the 10th century. The whole city is an extraordinary architectural masterpiece in which even the smallest building contains works by some of the world's greatest artists such as Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and others.

In this lagoon covering 50,000 km², nature and history have been closely linked since the 5th century when Venetian populations, to escape barbarian raids, found refuge on the sandy islands of Torcello, Jesolo and Malamocco. These temporary settlements gradually became permanent and the initial refuge of the land-dwelling peasants and fishermen became a maritime power. Over the centuries, during the entire period of the expansion of Venice, when it was obliged to defend its trading markets against the commercial undertakings of the Arabs, the Genoese and the Ottoman Turks, Venice never ceased to consolidate its position in the lagoon.

In this inland sea that has continuously been under threat, rises amid a tiny archipelago at the very edge of the waves one of the most extraordinary built-up areas of the Middle Ages. From Torcello to the north to Chioggia to the south, almost every small island had its own settlement, town, fishing village and artisan village (Murano). However, at the heart of the lagoon, Venice itself stood as one of the greatest capitals in the medieval world. When a group of tiny islands were consolidated and organized in a unique urban system, nothing remained of the primitive topography but what became canals, such as the Giudecca Canal, St Mark's Canal and the Great Canal, and a network of small rii that are the veritable arteries of a city on water.

Venice and its lagoon landscape is the result of a dynamic process which illustrates the interaction between people and the ecosystem of their natural environment over time. Human interventions show high technical and creative skills in the realization of the hydraulic and architectural works in the lagoon area. The unique cultural heritage accumulated in the lagoon over the centuries is attested by the discovery of important archaeological settlements in the Altino area and other sites on the mainland, which were important communication and trade hubs.

Venice and its lagoon form an inseparable whole of which the city of Venice is the pulsating historic heart and a unique artistic achievement. The influence of Venice on the development of architecture and monumental arts has been considerable.

Criterion (i): Venice is a unique artistic achievement. The city is built on 118 small islands and seems to float on the waters of the lagoon, composing an unforgettable landscape whose imponderable beauty inspired Canaletto, Guardi, Turner and many other painters. The lagoon of Venice also has one of the highest concentrations of masterpieces in the world: from Torcello's Cathedral to the church of Santa Maria della Salute. The years of the Republic's extraordinary Golden Age are represented by monuments of incomparable beauty: San Marco, Palazzo Ducale, San Zanipolo, Scuola di San Marco, Frari and Scuola di San Rocco, San Giorgio Maggiore, etc.

⁶⁷ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/documents/>

⁶⁸ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/>

Criterion (ii): The influence of Venice on the development of architecture and monumental arts is considerable; first through the Serenissima's fondachi or trading stations, along the Dalmatian coast, in Asia Minor and in Egypt, in the islands of the Ionian Sea, the Peloponnesus, Crete, and Cyprus, where the monuments were clearly built following Venetian models. But when it began to lose its power over the seas, Venice exerted its influence in a very different manner, thanks to its great painters. Bellini and Giorgione, then Tiziano, Tintoretto, Veronese and Tiepolo completely changed the perception of space, light and colour thus leaving a decisive mark on the development of painting and decorative arts in the whole of Europe.

Criterion (iii): With the unusualness of an archaeological site which still breathes life, Venice bears testimony unto itself. This mistress of the seas is a link between the East and the West, between Islam and Christianity and lives on through thousands of monuments and vestiges of a time gone by.

Criterion (iv): Venice possesses an incomparable series of architectural ensembles illustrating the height of the Republic's splendour. From great monuments such as Piazza San Marco and Piazzetta (the cathedral, Palazzo Ducale, Marciana, Museo Correr Procuratie Vecchie), to the more modest residences in the calli and campi of its six quarters (Sestieri), including the 13th century Scuole hospitals and charitable or cooperative institutions, Venice presents a complete typology of medieval architecture, whose exemplary value goes hand-in-hand with the outstanding character of an urban setting which had to adapt to the special requirements of the site.

Criterion (v): In the Mediterranean area, the lagoon of Venice represents an outstanding example of a semi-lacustral habitat which has become vulnerable as a result of irreversible natural and climate changes. In this coherent ecosystem where the muddy shelves (alternately above and below water level) are as important as the islands, pile-dwellings, fishing villages and rice-fields need to be protected no less than the palazzi and churches.

Criterion (vi): Venice symbolizes the people's victorious struggle against the elements as they managed to master a hostile nature. The city is also directly and tangibly associated with the history of humankind. The "Queen of the Seas", heroically perched on her tiny islands, extended her horizon well beyond the lagoon, the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. It was from Venice that Marco Polo (1254-1324) set out in search of China, Annam, Tonkin, Sumatra, India and Persia. His tomb at San Lorenzo recalls the role of Venetian merchants in the discovery of the world - after the Arabs, but well before the Portuguese.

Integrity

Due to their geographical characteristics, the city of Venice and the lagoon settlements have retained their original integrity of the built heritage, the settlement structure and its interrelation in the lagoon. The boundaries of the city and other lagoon settlements are well circumscribed and delimited by water. Venice has retained its boundaries, the landscape characteristics and the physical and functional relationships with the lagoon environment. The structure and urban morphological form of Venice has remained broadly similar to the one the city had in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

The maintained integrity of the layout and urban structure of Venice therefore attests to the formal and organizational conception of space and the technical and creative skills of a culture and civilization that created exceptional architectural values. Despite the diverse styles and historical stratifications, the buildings and constructions have organically fused into a coherent unit, maintaining their physical characteristics and

their architectural and aesthetic qualities, as well as their more technical features, through an architectural language that is both independent and consistent with the function and design principles of the traditional urban structure of Venice.

Transformations have occurred in the urban settlements in terms of functionality. The historic city has altered its urban functions due to the significant decline in population, the change of use of many buildings, the replacement of traditional productive activities and services with other activities. The exceptionally high tourism pressure on the city of Venice has resulted in a partial functional transformation in Venice and the historic centres of the Lagoon. This includes functional transformations of Venice and the lagoon historic centers caused by the replacement of residents' houses with accommodation and commercial activities and services to the residence with tourism-related activities that endanger the identity and the cultural and social integrity of the property.

These factors may in the future have a serious negative impact on the identity and integrity of the property and are consequently the major priorities within the Management Plan.

The phenomenon of high water is a threat to the integrity of cultural, environmental and landscape values of the property. The occurrence of exceptional high waters poses a significant threat to the protection and integrity of Venice lagoon and historic settlements. The increase in the frequency and levels of high tides, in addition to the phenomenon of wave motion caused by motorboats, is one of the main causes of deterioration and damage to the building structures and urban areas. Although this phenomenon has a significant impact on the morphology and landscape configuration of the lagoon due to the erosion of the seabed and of the salt marshes, it does not at present endanger the integrity of the property. These threats are recognized as a priority in the Management Plan which includes a specific monitoring system.

Authenticity

The assets of the World Heritage property have substantially retained their original character. The urban structure has predominantly maintained the formal and spatial characters present in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance with a few later additions due to landfills and land reclamation. The numerous monuments and monumental complexes in the city have retained their character and authenticity through the conservation of their constitutive elements and their architectural features. Similarly, the whole urban system has maintained the same layout, settlement patterns and organization of open spaces from medieval times and the Renaissance. In the structural restoration of the buildings, much attention is given to applying conservation criteria and the use and recovery of materials in their historical stratifications. The local culture has developed a deep-seated continuity in the use of materials and techniques. The expression of the authentic cultural values of the property is given precisely by the adoption and recognition of the effectiveness of traditional conservation and restoration practices and techniques.

The other lagoon settlements have also maintained a high level of authenticity, which continues to manifest itself in preservation of the character and specificity of the places. The historical processes that were developed over the centuries and helped shape the lagoon landscape have left a strong testimony of the action of the people, whose work is tangibly visible and recognizable in its authenticity and historical sequences.

Protection and management requirements

The Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities through its local offices (Regional Directorates and Superintendencies) performs the institutional tasks of protection and

preservation of the cultural heritage and landscape, under the Code of the Cultural and Landscape Heritage (Legislative Decree no. 42/2004).

One of the main tools for the protection of the property is the implementation of the 1973 Special Law for Venice, which aims to guarantee the protection of the landscape, historical, archaeological and artistic heritage of the city of Venice and its lagoon by ensuring its socio-economic livelihood.

At regional level, land-use and urban planning tools aim at the promotion and implementation of the sustainable development of the area, with particular attention to the protection of the cultural and historical identity of the settlements, the landscape and areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Provincial plans deal with the synergies between the preservation and development of the environment and the traditional economic activities and tourism, aimed at the sustainable valorisation of the property, intersecting issues relevant to both cultural heritage and environmental values.

At municipal level, the existing planning tools guarantee, in particular, the refurbishment and upgrade of the existing architectural heritage and infrastructure, urban renewal, public housing programs, roads. They regulate action on the urban fabric, ensuring the preservation of its physical and typological characteristics and the compatibility of any intended use.

Other public authorities, such as Public Works Authority (formerly the Venice Water Authority), safeguard Venice and the lagoon ecosystem. Environmental protection and landscape is governed by specific laws and regulations, under which the Superintendence of Architectural Heritage and Landscape of Venice and its Lagoon oversees all works and interventions that can change the landscape of the property.

The Management Plan for the World Heritage property is approved by the responsible bodies for the protection and management of the property: Veneto Region, Province of Padua, Province of Venice, Municipality of Venice, Municipality of Campagna Lupia, Municipality of Cavallino-Treporti, Municipality of Chioggia, Municipality of Codevigo, Municipality of Mira, Municipality of Musile di Piave, Municipality of Jesolo, Municipality of Quarto D'Altino, Regional Department of Cultural Heritage and Landscape of Veneto, Superintendence of Architectural Heritage and Landscape of Venice and its Lagoon, Superintendence of Archaeological Heritage of Veneto, Superintendence of Historical and Artistic Heritage of Venice and of the municipalities in the lagoon boundary area, Superintendence of the Archives of Veneto, State Archive of Venice, Diocese of Venice, Venice Water Authority and Port Authority of Venice.

The development of the Management Plan has been based on a participatory approach involving all these responsible bodies and the local organisations. They are represented in the Steering Committee which meets regularly, where the Municipality of Venice has been appointed as the coordinating body.

The Management Plan contains many projects for communication and participation in decision-making and for the implementation of the objectives of protection and enhancement of the property. A specific Action Plan focuses on awareness building, communication, promotion, education and training in order to develop a greater awareness among the citizens on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The most pressing management issues are related to high tides and mobile barriers, tourism pressure and maintenance of traditional practices and techniques for restoration.

In order to preserve the lagoon and protect its historic settlements and the historic city of Venice against flooding, several projects have been elaborated. These include an integrated system of public works, such as the mobile flood gates (MoSE - Experimental Electromechanical Module) to temporarily isolate the lagoon from the

sea and some complementary measures capable of reducing the level of the most frequent tides in the lowest areas on the water.

A sustainable tourism strategy is one of the Management Plan priorities. Strategic objectives and a specific Action Plan have been agreed to relieve the pressure on Venice by offering alternative and complementary options to traditional tourism by creating a network among the municipalities in the lagoon boundary area and other key stakeholders that are operating within the property. In addition, other initiatives aiming at managing tourist flows are in place. Within the territory of the property there are excellent universities, high level national and international institutes and research centers for the conservation and protection of artistic and architectural heritage. However, many consolidated restoration practices, based on traditional techniques, are at risk to disappear or to be incorrectly applied, for the use of techniques and materials that do not always correspond to the principles and methods of restoration and for the lack of qualified operators. The underlying causes of the reduced efficacy of the restoration interventions are the high costs of the urban maintenance and restoration of buildings. These issues are recognised within the Management Plan that contains a specific Action Plan and projects regarding training of operators and professionals, the promotion and dissemination of good restoration practices.

ANNEX 3. World Heritage Committee Decisions

12th session of the World Heritage Committee, Brasilia, Brazil, 5 - 9 December 1988

Decision: CONF 001 XII.57

Donation for Use in the Preservation of the Great Wall (China) and Venice (Italy)

57. The Secretariat informed the Committee that, in addition to the budget it had approved, a sum of two million French Francs (\$340,000 as of 9 December 1988) had been donated to Unesco in November 1988 by a private association which had organized a special cultural event "The Return of Marco Polo". This sum was to be divided equally for use in the preservation of the Great Wall (China) and Venice (Italy), two World Heritage properties.

13th session of the World Heritage Committee, Paris, 11-15 December 1989

Decision: CONF 004 IX.22

22. The same delegate informed the Committee of his concern over the announcement of a universal exhibition in Venice. The fragile structures and the limited space of this town, inscribed together with its lagoon on the World Heritage List in 1987, made Venice extremely vulnerable to the effects of mass events. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Director-General had already written to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy requesting more details on this project. The Committee decided to launch the following appeal: The World Heritage Committee, meeting for its 13th session at Unesco headquarters in Paris from 11 to 15 December 1989, expressed its grave concern about the new threats to Venice which is inscribed on the World Heritage List. A universal exhibition, which would attract several hundreds of thousands of visitors in addition to the usual surge of tourists, risks threatening the integrity of this heritage which is unique in the history, art and civilization of humanity. The World Heritage Committee calls upon the Italian authorities so that irreparable damage can be avoided.

14th session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, Paris, 11-14 June 1990

Decision: CONF 003 IV.B.43

In the course of its fourteenth session the Bureau was informed of the Italian authorities' decision not to confirm the proposal to have Venice selected as the site of the Universal Exhibition for year 2000. The members of the Bureau welcomed the news and expressed great satisfaction at the decisive role played by the Committee in that regard

37th session of the World Heritage Committee, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 17-27 June 2013

Decision: 37 COM 8E: The World Heritage Committee adopted the retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value, as presented in the Annex of Document WHC-13/37.COM/8E, including Venice and its Lagoon.

38th session of the World Heritage Committee, Doha, Qatar, 15 - 25 June 2014

Decision: 38 COM 7B.27

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-14/38.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **13 COM IX.22**, adopted at its 13th session (UNESCO, 1989),

3. Takes note of the State Party's efforts to develop a range of mechanisms to safeguard Venice and its lagoon landscape and of the approved Management Plan resulting from extensive consultations among all stakeholders, and encourages the State Party to undertake its revision based on the results from the technical evaluation by ICOMOS;
4. Expresses its concern about the extent and scale of proposals for large infrastructure, navigation and construction projects in the Lagoon that can potentially jeopardize the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property by generating irreversible transformations on the landscape and seascape of the property;
5. Requests the State Party to undertake Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) for these projects to assess both individual and overall cumulative impacts of the potential modifications of the Lagoon and its immediate land and seascape, in order to prevent any irreversible transformations and potential threat to the property's OUV and to enhance the protection of the property in relation to sustaining its OUV;
6. Also expresses its concern about the negative environmental impacts triggered by medium motor boats to high tonnage ships that have progressively caused erosion of the lagoon beds, mud banks and salt marshes, and which could represent potential threat to the property's OUV and also requests the State Party to enforce speed limits and regulate the number and type of boats;
7. Urges the State Party to prohibit the largest ships and tankers to enter the Lagoon and further requests the State Party to adopt, as a matter of urgency, a legal document introducing such a process;
8. Recognises the exceptionally high tourism pressure on the city of Venice, and the extensive tourism related activities, urges the State Party to prioritise the development of a sustainable tourism strategy, and also encourages the State Party to develop jointly with the major tourism and cruise companies alternative solutions to allow cruise tourists to enjoy and understand the value of Venice and also its fragility;
9. Further encourages financial institutions and agencies to ensure that Heritage and/or Environmental Impact Assessments are carried out to determine that there are no negative impacts on the OUV, before planning investment in large-scale developments within the property and its setting;
10. Encourages furthermore the State Party to continue with the assessment of the hydrology and geo-mechanics functioning of the Venice Lagoon and its whole drainage basin; and invites the State Party to establish a strong coordination among all stakeholders concerned to ensure the hydro-geological balances of the Venice Lagoon and the whole drainage basin, as well as the protection of all attributes that convey the OUV of the property;
11. Also takes note of the proposal for the establishment of the buffer zone and also invites the State Party to undertake its revision in line with the ICOMOS technical review and submit to the World Heritage Centre the minor boundary modification by **1 February 2015**;
12. Requests furthermore the State Party to invite a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property in 2015 to assess current conditions at the property, including the evaluation of potential impacts derived from development proposals and identify options for development proposals in accordance to the OUV of the property, as well as to review if the property is faced with threats which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics and meets the criteria for its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger in line with Paragraph 179 of the *Operational Guidelines*, and recommends to the State Party to also invite a representative of the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention to take part in this reactive monitoring mission;
13. Requests moreover the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2015**, a progress report on the state of conservation of the property, and by **1 December 2015** a state of conservation report on the implementation of the above,

both reports including a 1-page executive summary, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016.

**40th session of the World Heritage Committee, Istanbul, Turkey 10-20 July 2016;
UNESCO's Headquarters 24-26 October 2016**

Decision: 40 COM 7B.52

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **38 COM 7B.27**, adopted at its 38th session (Doha, 2014),
3. Expresses its extreme concern that the combination of previous developments, ongoing transformations and proposed projects within the property which are threatening serious deterioration of the eco and cultural systems of the Lagoon and irreversible changes to the overall relationship between the City and its Lagoon, as well as the loss of architectural and town-planning coherence of the historic city, all of which would lead to substantive and irreversible loss of authenticity and integrity;
4. Considers that the property requires an immediate improvement to the planning tools available through the creation of:
 - a. an integrated strategy for all on-going and planned developments within the property,
 - b. a three-dimensional morphological model and
 - c. a sustainable tourism strategy, all of which should be reflected in an updated Management Plan for the property; this revised planning approach should also be founded on a shared vision of authorities and stakeholders which affords priority to sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and its landscape and seascape setting;
5. Reiterates its request to the State Party to enforce speed limits and regulate the number and type of boats in the Lagoon and in the canals;
6. Also reiterates its request to the State Party to adopt, as a matter of urgency, a legal document introducing prohibition of the largest ships and tankers to enter the Lagoon and requests the State Party to put in place all necessary strategic, planning and management frameworks to this end;
7. Also requests the State Party to halt all new projects within the property, prior to the mid-term assessment of the Management Plan, and the submission of details of proposed developments, together with Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), to the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, for review by the Advisory Bodies;
8. Endorses the recommendations of the 2015 mission and further requests the State Party to fully implement these recommendations;
9. Requests furthermore the State Party to revise the proposed buffer zone for the property in line with the ICOMOS technical review and submit it to the World Heritage Centre as a minor boundary modification, by **1 December 2016**, for examination by the Committee at its 41st session in 2017;
10. Finally requests that the State Party implement all urgent measures highlighted in the mission report and submit to the World Heritage Committee a detailed report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, by **1 February 2017** for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017, **with a view, if no substantial progress is accomplished by the State Party**

until then, to consider inscribing the property on the List of the World Heritage in Danger.

41st session of the World Heritage Committee, Krakow, Poland 2-12 July 2017

Decision: 41 COM 7B.48

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/17/41.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decisions 38 COM 7B.27 and 40 COM 7B.52, adopted at its 38th (Doha, 2014) and 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) sessions respectively,
3. Notes with appreciation that the State Party and all the institutions involved, having recognized the major risks to the property, are working collaboratively and in an engaged manner to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
4. Notes that progress has been made towards the implementation of some of the 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission recommendations endorsed by the Committee and reiterates its request that the State Party continue to implement all the recommendations put forward in the Decision 40 COM 7B.52, including immediate, short, medium and long-term measures;
5. Acknowledges the drafting of the Climate Plan and encourages the State Party to take into account the "Policy on the Impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage Properties" in the development of the plan, considering that 'Venice and its Lagoon' is in a privileged position and might have the potential to influence monitoring and adaptation processes that can be applied elsewhere;
6. Welcomes the details submitted regarding the new sustainable tourism strategy that will make use of the consultative model proposed by the UNESCO Sustainable Tourism Programme;
7. Also notes that the State Party is exploring an option of using existing port channel (Canale Vittorio Emanuele III) with a view to halt the passage of large ships through the San Marco basin and the Giudecca canal, and to avoid the excavation of new ones and requests the State Party to submit detailed plans and a detailed timeframe for the implementation of the selected solution;
8. Also reiterates its request that the State Party submit, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, details of any newly proposed projects, together with all relevant cumulative Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA), with a specific section focusing on their potential impact on the OUV of the property;
9. Also acknowledges progress made towards the completion of the MOSE defence system and also requests the State Party to provide detailed and updated information on this project, including its management and maintenance systems;
10. Further reiterates its request that the State Party update the Management Plan and revise its planning approach in order to sustain in the long term the OUV of the property, its landscape and seascape;
11. Further requests the State Party to provide a much clearer detailed road map for the way forward, with measurable benchmarks and a detailed Action Plan to deliver what is needed, commensurate with the major threats to the property;
12. Requests furthermore the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Committee a detailed report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, including a detailed road map on the way forward, by 1 December 2018 for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 43rd session in 2019, with a view to considering, if adequate progress in the implementation of the above

recommendations has not been made, the inscription of the property on the List of the World Heritage in Danger.

43rd session of the World Heritage Committee, Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan 30 June – 10 July 2019

Decision: 43 COM 8D

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/19/43.COM/8D,
2. Recalling Decision **42 COM 8D**, adopted at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018),
3. Acknowledges the excellent work accomplished by States Parties in the clarification of the boundaries of their World Heritage properties and commends them for their efforts to improve the credibility of the World Heritage List;
4. Recalls that the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies are not able to examine proposals for minor or significant modifications to boundaries of World Heritage properties whenever the delimitations of such properties as inscribed remain unclear;
5. Takes note of the clarifications of property boundaries and areas provided by the States Parties as presented in the Annex of Document WHC/19/43.COM/8D:

ARAB STATES

- Jordan, Quseir Amra

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- Kazakhstan, Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

- Germany, Maulbronn Monastery Complex
- Italy, Venice and its Lagoon
- Russian Federation, Citadel, Ancient City and Fortress Buildings of Derbent

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- Bolivia, City of Potosí
- Ecuador, City of Quito

6. Requests the States Parties which have not yet answered the questions raised in the framework of the Retrospective Inventory to provide all clarifications and documentation as soon as possible, and by **1 December 2019** at the latest, for their subsequent examination, if the technical requirements are met, by the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2020.

Decision: 43 COM 8B.46

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/19/43.COM/8B.Add and WHC/19/43.COM/INF.8B1.Add,
2. Refers the proposed buffer zone for **Venice and its Lagoon, Italy**, back to the State Party in order to allow it to:
 1. Provide clarification as to why one of the water bodies has been excluded from the proposed buffer zone and reconsider the exclusion of this part of the southern coastal strip from the proposed buffer zone,

2. Sign a Programme Agreement in order to put in place officially the governance system for the coordinated management, enhancement and sustainable development of the proposed buffer zone.

Decision: 43 COM 7B.86

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/19/43.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decisions **40 COM 7B.52** and **41 COM 7B.48**, adopted at its 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) and 41st (Krakow, 2017) sessions respectively,
3. Notes the efforts of the State Party and all the institutions involved to work collaboratively to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and that progress has been achieved towards the implementation of the recommendations put forward in Decisions **40 COM 7B.52** and **41 COM 7B.48**, and those of the 2015 mission;
4. Acknowledges the preparation of the 'Climate Action Plan', the 'Water Plan for the City of Venice' and the 'Environmental and Morphological Plan for the Lagoon of Venice', and requests that these important documents be formally submitted for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, prior to finalization and implementation, and encourages the State Party and its relevant agencies to liaise with the World Heritage Centre regarding the potential for the 'Climate Action Plan' to be shared and promoted in a manner that highlights monitoring and adaptation processes;
5. Also acknowledges the 'Project of Territorial Governance of Tourism in Venice', which incorporates relevant policy tools, including the Sustainable Tourism Programme and the 'Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective in the *World Heritage Convention*', and also requests the State Party to report back to the Committee on the short term outcomes achieved by these initiatives, and the level of mitigating the negative impacts of tourism pressure;
6. Welcomes the alternative navigation path that has been identified for the relocation of ships with a gross tonnage of over 40,000 tons to Marghera, and the support for the Venetian cruise industry through construction of a new terminal in Marghera, and further requests the State Party to submit detailed plans and the timeframe for the implementation of the proposed plans that will allow large ships to reach the Venice Maritime station without passing through the San Marco Basin and the Giudecca Canal;
7. Also notes the pending completion of the MOSE defence system and the updated information on this project, and requests furthermore the State Party to provide regular updated information on this project, including its management and maintenance systems, and report on the medium- and long-term prospect of this project to fulfil the objective to avoid the negative impacts of climate change, especially temporary flooding and rising sea level;
8. Further acknowledges the initiative of the State Party for updating the Management Plan of the property, which is an essential tool for sustaining its OUV, and its landscape and seascape setting, and requests moreover the State Party to incorporate the detailed road map and its measurable benchmarks within the updated Management Plan, additionally to supplement the document with a planned management strategy for the potential buffer zone of the property, and to submit the draft updated Management Plan for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, prior to its finalization and adoption;
9. Also encourages the State Party to strengthen its monitoring system for vulnerability of heritage areas to climate change and disaster risk, and continue developing and implementing mitigation measure to reduce their risk to the OUV of the property;

10. Notes with concern the lack of regular communication of the State Party with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, and reiterates its previous requests to the State Party to submit, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, details of any newly proposed projects, together with all relevant Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA), in due time prior to irreversible decisions and implementation, including a specific section focusing on their potential impact on the OUV of the property, and addressing potential cumulative impacts;
11. 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, **with a view to considering the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger if the implemented mitigation measures and the adapted management system does not result in significant and measurable progress in the state of conservation of the property.**

ANNEX 4. Terms of Reference

Concerning the main objectives of the Mission, the Mission shall:

1. Consider what progress has been made in relation to mitigating threats to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, including its integrity and authenticity;
2. Consider what achievements and significant measurable progress has been made to the state of conservation of the property, as requested by the World Heritage Committee in Decision 43 COM 7B.86, resulting from implementation of mitigation measures and of improvements to the adapted management system of the property.

With regard to the above objectives, the mission will assess progress and provide technical advice to the State Party and its authorities responsible for the implementation of the World Heritage Committee decisions and the recommendations of the 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission on the following issues:

Mitigation measures

- Consider progress with the overall plan, the different alternative options, detailed timeframe and progress with measures to prohibit large ships to enter the Lagoon or the option to allow large ships to reach the Venice Maritime station without passing through the San Marco Basin and the Giudecca Canal, also as part of the framework of the 'Pact for the Development of the City of Venice';
- Consider progress in the implementation of the 'Project of Territorial Governance of Tourism in Venice', including its achievements for measurable outcomes and the level of mitigating the negative impacts of tourism pressure; additionally, reviewing its effectiveness to achieve the objectives of the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme and the 'Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective in the World Heritage Convention';
- Consider progress with the preparation and finalisation of the 'Environmental and Morphological Plan for the Lagoon of Venice' and the 'Climate Action Plan' and the planned timeline for their submission for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, as well as the planned implementation process of the 'Water Plan for the City of Venice'.

Adaptive Management System

- Review the governance and management system of the property, including the effectiveness of the intersectional cooperation between the different stakeholders responsible for the management of the property;
- Consider progress with updating the Management Plan, including how it will incorporate the existing, detailed road map for the management of the property and its measurable benchmarks and be extended to cover the potential buffer zone of the property;
- Consider progress with strengthening the monitoring system for vulnerability of heritage areas in relation to climate change and disaster risk;
- Clarify the role and content of the proposed outlined preliminary analysis for development plans and large-scale/infrastructure projects within the property and surrounding areas and how these will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*; additionally, the role and importance of Heritage Impact Assessments and/or Strategic Environmental Assessments addressing also potential cumulative impacts on the OUV of the property;

- Consider progress with measures to improve communication with the World Heritage Centre.

Furthermore, the Mission will focus on the exceptional high tide events that hit Venice at the end of 2019, by

- reviewing existing policies and guidelines addressing disaster risk reduction, disaster risk management, emergency preparedness and response and post disaster assessment and reconstruction, and how these policies and guidelines are included in the management system of the World Heritage property;
- reviewing the already assessed impacts of the last high water levels on the OUV and attributes of the property;
- reviewing the progress for the completion of the MOSE defence system, and its planned management and maintenance system in the long term, additionally its potential to fulfil the objective of avoiding negative impacts of temporary flooding and rising sea level.

Overall, the Mission should assess whether sufficient substantial progress has been demonstrated and quantified in relation to addressing mitigation measures and undertaking improvements to the overall adaptive management system of the property to reverse the downward trend in the state of conservation of the property, as acknowledged by the Committee in recent years, and, if so, how this progress will be maintained over the next few years through the introduction of detailed strategic planning and through the continued implementation of defined mitigation measures.

ANNEX 5. Composition of Mission Team

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Prof. Dr. Bernhard Furrer
Representative of ICOMOS, International Council on Monuments and Sites
Architect ETH-Z SIA ass.BSA
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Dr Tobias Salathé
Representative of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
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ANNEX 6. Programme**JOINT ADVISORY MISSION WHC/ICOMOS/RAMSAR****World Heritage Property 'Venice and its Lagoon'****27-31 January 2020**

Mission Delegation	Réka Viragos	Representative of UNESCO World Heritage Centre
	Bernhard Furrer	Representative of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Cities)
	Tobias Salathé	Representative of Ramsar Convention Secretariat

MONDAY 27th JANUARY 2020

11.00 – 16.30

Ca' Farsetti, Sala Giunta Grande

Official opening of the Mission. Illustration of the overall vision for the city and territory. *Acqua Granda* of 12.11.2019. Planned and ongoing works under the Pact for Venice. Works of the Inter-ministerial Committee for the safeguarding of Venice "*Comitatone*". Large ships passage. Heritage protection and conservation works within the historic city (architectural/urban heritage). Ordinary urban maintenance.

City of Venice	Luigi Brugnaro	Mayor
	Paola Mar	Councillor for Tourism
	Massimiliano De Martin	Councillor for Urban Planning, Environment and Sustainability
	Derek Donadini	Cabinet of the Mayor
	Luca Zuin	Cabinet of the Mayor
	Alessandro Bertasi	Cabinet of the Mayor
	Marco Mastroianni	Director of Strategic and Environmental Projects and International and Development Policies
	Elisabetta Piccin	Manager of Tourism and Territorial Control Office
	Katia Basili	Head of the Office of the World Heritage Property 'Venice and its Lagoon'
	Elena Fregonese	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
Chiara Colussi	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"	
MAECI - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Massimo Riccardo	Permanent Representative of Italy Delegation to UNESCO

	Paolo Andrea Bartorelli	Head of the VI Office at the Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation
MiBACT - Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	Pia Petrangeli	Director of Secretariat General – Sector I Coordination – UNESCO Office
	Francesca Riccio	Secretariat General – Sector I Coordination – UNESCO Office
MiBACT -Superintendence for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the City of Venice and its Lagoon-SABAP	Emanuela Carpani	Superintendent
	Francesco Trovò	Head of Conservation Office - SC technical referee
Interregional Authority for Public Works and Infrastructure	Valerio Volpe	Director of the Office of Safeguard of Venice and lagoon- SC technical referee
Harbor Master Office - Maritime Authority- Coast Guard	Sandro Nuccio	Chief Technical and Administrative Unit
North Adriatic Sea Port Authority – Ports of Venice and Chioggia	Antonio Revedin	Director of Strategic Planning and Development- SC technical referee
UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe	Ana Luiza Massot Thompson-Flores	Director

17.00 – 19.00

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Palazzo Zorzi

Meeting with key stakeholders, categories and associations

TUESDAY 28th JANUARY 2020

9.00 – 11.00

Ca 'Farsetti, Sala Giunta Grande

Meeting with the institutional representatives of the authorities of the Steering Committee (SC) on the Site protection, conservation and enhancement.

City of Venice	Luigi Brugnaro	Mayor
	Luca Zuin	Cabinet of the Mayor
	Giuseppe Roberto Chiaia	Director of Inter-institutional Legal Affairs
	Marco Mastroianni	Director of Strategic and Environmental Projects and International and Development Policies
	Katia Basili	Head of the Office of the World Heritage Property 'Venice and its Lagoon'
	Elena Fregonese	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"

	Chiara Colussi	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
Veneto Region	Cristiano Corazzari	Councillor for Territory, Culture and Safety - delegated by the President
	Salvina Sist	Director of Territorial Planning Directorate
	Giulio Bodon	Head of Culture Unit- Coordination table UNESCO sites in Veneto - SC technical referee
Metropolitan City of Venice	Massimo Gattolin	Director of Environment Office - SC technical referee - delegated by the General Secretary
Province of Padua	Roberto Anzaldi	Head of Territorial Planning Office - SC technical referee - delegated by the President
	Cosetta Bernini	Territorial Planning Office - SC technical referee
Municipality of Campagna Lupia	Luana Marinello	Councillor for Equal Opportunities, Youth Policies, Regional Planning and EU - delegated by the Mayor
Municipality of Cavallino Treporti	Gaetano di Gregorio	Head of Territorial Planning Office - SC technical referee - delegated by the Mayor
Municipality of Chioggia	Marco Veronese	Deputy Mayor - delegated by the Mayor
	Gianni Favaretto	Manager of Territorial Planning Office - SC technical referee
Municipality of Codevigo	Ettore Lazzaro	Deputy Mayor - delegated by the Mayor
	Paola Ranzato	Head of Culture Office - SC technical referee
Municipality of Jesolo	Daniela Vitale	Head of Territorial Planning Office - SC technical referee - delegated by the Mayor
Municipality of Mira	Marco Dori	Mayor
Municipality of Musile di Piave	Vittorio Maschietto	Deputy Mayor - delegated by the
Municipality of Quarto d'Altino	Claudio Grosso	Mayor
MiBACT Regional Secretariat for Veneto	Michele Castelli	Head of Protection Operational Unit - SC technical referee - delegated by the Director
MiBACT Superintendence for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the City of Venice and its Lagoon-SABAP	Emanuela Carpani	Superintendent
	Francesco Trovò	Head of Conservation Office - SC technical referee

MiBACT -Superintendence for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the Metropolitan area of Venice and the Provinces of Belluno, Padua and Treviso	Giuseppe Rallo	Director Coordinator - SC technical referee - delegated by the Superintendent
MiBACT -Superintendence for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the Provinces of Verona, Rovigo and Vicenza	Giulia Campanini	Head of Architecture and Landscape protection for the Province of Vicenza -delegated by the Superintendent
MiBACT -Archival and Bibliographic Superintendence of Veneto e and Trentino-Alto Adige	Eurosia Zuccolo	Superintendent
State Archive of Venice	Andrea Erbosio	Head of the Deposit Management Office - delegated by the Director
Diocese of Venice	Gianmatteo Caputo	Director of Cultural Heritage and Tourism – SC technical referee – delegated by the Patriarch of Venice
Interregional Authority for Public Works	Valerio Volpe	Director of the Office of Safeguard of Venice and lagoon- SC technical referee
North Adriatic Sea Port Authority – Ports of Venice and Chioggia	Pino Musolino	President
	Antonio Revedin	Director of Strategic Planning and Development- SC technical referee
MAECI - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Massimo Riccardo	Ambassador-Permanent Representative of Italy Delegation to UNESCO
	Paolo Bartorelli Andrea	Head of the VI Office at the Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation
MiBACT - Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	Pia Petrangeli	Director Secretariat General – Sector I Coordination – UNESCO Office

11.00-17.30

Liveability of the historic city. Environmental sustainability. Circular economy.

Boat tour- site visits. Itinerary: urban waste collection system, Royal Gardens, Sacca Fisola, Ecocentro Veritas in Fusina (recycling industry), Vittorio Emanuele III Canal, Porto Marghera, ENI biorefinery plant, Tronchetto island -Control Room

City of Venice	Simone Venturini	Councillor for Social Cohesion and Territorial Economic Development
	Massimiliano De Martin	Councillor for Urban Planning, Environment and Sustainability
	Luca Zuin	Cabinet of the Mayor

	Marco Mastroianni	Director of Strategic and Environmental Projects and International and Development Policies
	Katia Basili	Head of the Office of the World Heritage Property 'Venice and its Lagoon'
	Elena Fregonese	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
MiBACT - Superintendence for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the City of Venice and its Lagoon- SABAP	Emanuela Carpani	Superintendent
	Francesco Trovò	Head of Conservation Office - SC technical referee
Veritas SpA	Federico Adolfo	Director of Environmental Services for Venice historic city
Insula SpA	Nicola Picco	President
MAECI - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Massimo Riccardo	Permanent Representative of Italy Delegation to UNESCO
	Paolo Andrea Bartorelli	Head of the VI Office at the Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation
MiBACT - Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	Pia Petrangeli	Director Secretariat General – Sector I Coordination – UNESCO Office

WEDNESDAY 29th JANUARY 2020

9.00 – 13.00

Ca 'Farsetti, Sala Giunta Piccola

Sustainable tourism and the protection of the City.

Governance project and tourism Road Map. Entrance fee. Counting cameras. #EnjoyRespectVenezia campaign. veneziaunica and UNESCO itineraries. Mitigation of tourism effects on heritage. Major events management. Mobility System, Heritage conservation and enhancement.

City of Venice	Paola Mar	Councillor for Tourism
	Massimiliano De Martin	Councillor for Urban Planning, Environment and Sustainability
	Stefania Battaglia	Director of Trade Office
	Vincenzo de Nitto	Manager of Urban Planning Office
	Katia Basili	Head of the Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
	Elisabetta Piccin	Manager of Tourism and Territorial Control Office

	Elena Marini	Head of Territorial Governance of Tourism Office
	Chiara Colussi	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
Veneto Region	Pietro Stellini	Director of Tourism Legislation and Governance
	Stefan Marchioro	Manager of Territorial Projects and Tourism Governance
	Roberto Squarcina	Tourism Legislation and Governance
MAECI - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Massimo Riccardo	Permanent Representative of Italy Delegation to UNESCO
	Paolo Andrea Bartorelli	Head of the VI Office at the Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation
MiBACT - Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	Francesca Riccio	Secretariat General – Sector I Coordination – UNESCO Office
MiBACT - Superintendence for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the City of Venice and its Lagoon- SABAP	Emanuela Carpani	Superintendent
	Francesco Trovò	Head of Conservation Office - SC technical referee
MUVE – Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia	Mattia Agnetti	Executive Secretary
	Monica Rosina	Head of Technical Service and Maintenance Office
Venis SpA	Alessandra Poggiani	Director General
Vela SpA	Fabrizio D'Oria	Director of Communication, Events and MICE
AVM SpA	Giovanni Santoro	Director General

14.00 – 17.00

Conservation, protection and enhancement of Venice historic city

Site visits and meetings: Basilica of San Marco. Counting cameras placement. Meeting with the General Manager of the Teatro La Fenice di Venezia.

City of Venice	Paola Mar	Councillor for Tourism
	Luca Zuin	Cabinet of the Mayor
	Marco Mastroianni	Director of Strategic and Environmental Projects and International and Development Policies
	Katia Basili	Head of the Office of the World Heritage Property 'Venice and its Lagoon'

	Elisabetta Piccin	Manager of Tourism and Territorial Control Office
	Elena Marini	Head of Territorial Governance of Tourism Office
MiBACT- Superintendence for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the City of Venice and its Lagoon- SABAP	Emanuela Carpani	Superintendent
	Francesco Trovò	Head of Conservation Office - SC technical referee
Procuratoria of San Marco	Carlo Alberto Tesserin	Primo Procuratore
	Pierpaolo Campostrini	Member of the Procuratoria Council
Fondazione "Teatro la Fenice di Venezia"	Andrea Erri	General Manager
Fondazione Querini Stampalia	Giovanni Castellani	Vice President
	Marigusta Lazzari	Director
MAECI - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Massimo Riccardo	Permanent Representative of Italy Delegation to UNESCO
	Paolo Andrea Bartorelli	Head of the VI Office at the Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation
MiBACT - Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	Francesca Riccio	Secretariat General – Sector I Coordination – UNESCO Office

THURSDAY 30th JANUARY 2020

9.00 – 12.30

Palazzo X Savi, Salone Comitato

MoSE works - Bocca di Lido

MoSE System / maintenance/ management.

State of progress of the MoSE system. Environmental safeguarding and structural works of Venice and its lagoon. Morphological Plan for the Lagoon of Venice.

City of Venice	Katia Basili	Head of the Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
	Chiara Colussi	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
	Elisabetta Piccin	Manager of Tourism and Territorial Control Office
	Elena Marini	Head of Territorial Governance of Tourism Office
	Alvise Papa	Head of Civil Protection - High tide Forecasting Centre
Interregional Authority for Public Works	Valerio Volpe	Director of the Office of Safeguard of Venice and lagoon- SC technical referee

Consorzio Venezia Nuova	Elena Zambardi	Head of Communication and External Relations Office
	Alessandro Soru	Engineer in Charge of the MoSE works
MAECI - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Paolo Andrea Bartorelli	Head of the VI Office at the Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation
MiBACT - Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	Francesca Riccio	Secretariat General – Sector I Coordination – UNESCO Office

14.00 – 16.00

Harbor Master Office – San Marco

Big Ships passage and Harbor Master Office activities.

Climate change/mitigation/adaptation

Climate Policies. Climate Action Plan. Risks prevention and management. High tide Forecasting Centre. Water Plan for the City of Venice. Wide area plans and projects.

City of Venice	Derek Donadini	Cabinet of the Mayor
	Luca Zuin	Cabinet of the Mayor
	Marco Mastroianni	Director of Strategic and Environmental Projects and International and Development Policies
	Katia Basili	Head of the Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
	Cristiana Scarpa	Head of Environment Office
	Francesco Vascellari	Head of Civil Protection - Risks Management Office
	Alvise Papa	Head of Civil Protection - High tide Forecasting Centre
	Marco Favaro	Civil Protection - High tide Forecasting Centre
	Elena Fregonese	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
	Chiara Colussi	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
Metropolitan City of Venice	Massimo Gattolin	Manager of Environment Office
Interregional Authority for Public Works	Valerio Volpe	Director of the Office of Safeguard of Venice and lagoon-SC technical referee
Consorzio Venezia Nuova	Elena Zambardi	Head of Communication and External Relations Office

Harbor Master Office - Maritime Authority- Coast Guard	Piero Pellizzari	Commander
	Sandro Nuccio	Chief Technical and Administrative Unit
MiBACT - Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	Francesca Riccio	Secretariat General – Sector I Coordination – UNESCO Office

17.00 – 19.00

Chioggia

Storage facility for petroleum products in Chioggia

City of Venice	Marco Mastroianni	Director of Strategic and Environmental Projects and International and Development Policies
	Katia Basili	Head of the Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
MiBACT - Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	Francesca Riccio	Secretariat General – Sector I Coordination – UNESCO Office
City of Chioggia	Alessandro Ferro	Mayor
	Marco Veronese	Deputy Mayor
	Gianni Favaretto	Manager of Territorial Planning Office - SC technical referee
Socogas SpA	Pierpaolo Perale	Manager

FRIDAY 31st JANUARY 2020

9.00 – 17.30

M9 Museum, Mestre

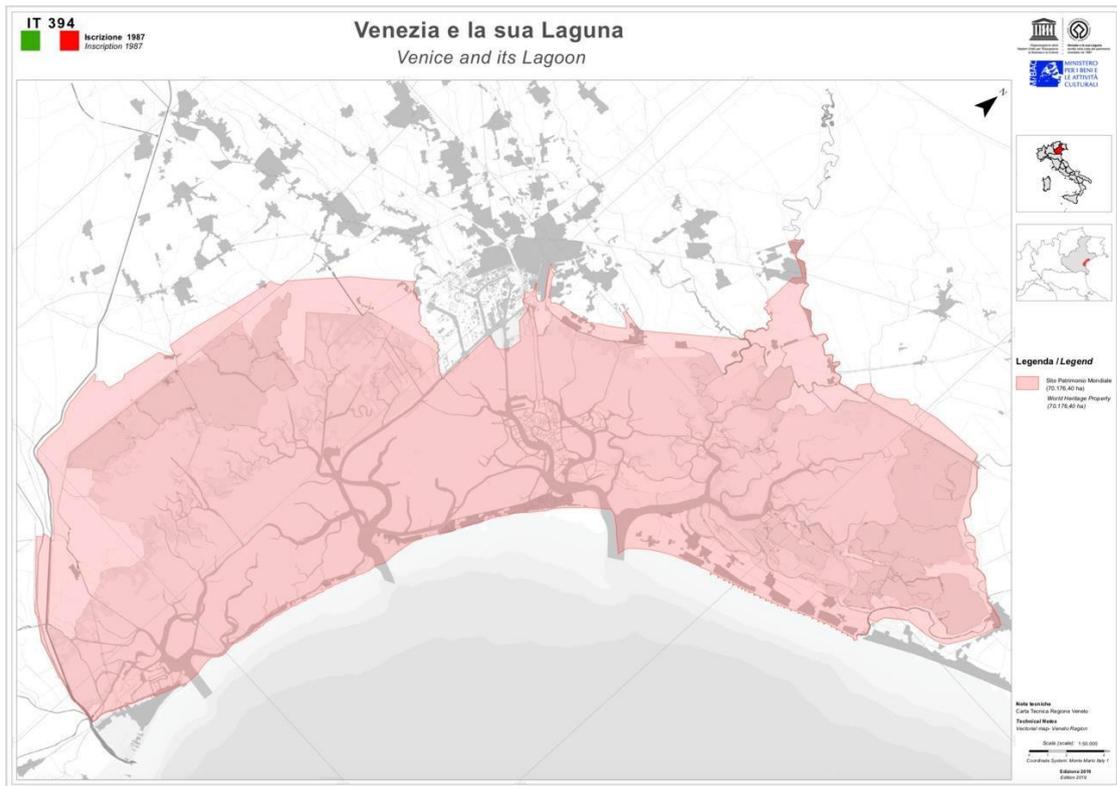
Territorial planning and sustainable development. Illustration of the protection and assessment system in the territorial plans and projects approval processes within the WH property. Illustration of major large-scale plans and projects, infrastructural projects, significant restoration works, mainland urban regeneration, redevelopment and new construction projects (planned, ongoing, completed). Management Plan and Buffer Zone. Heritage Impact Assessment and reporting under Paragraph 172 OG.

City of Venice	Paola Mar	Councillor for Tourism
	Massimiliano De Martin	Councillor for Urban Planning, Environment and Sustainability Introduction
	Giorgia Pea	Communal Councillor in charge of Culture
	Luca Zuin	Cabinet of the Mayor
	Alessandro Bertasi	Cabinet of the Mayor
	Marco Mastroianni	Director of Strategic and Environmental Projects and

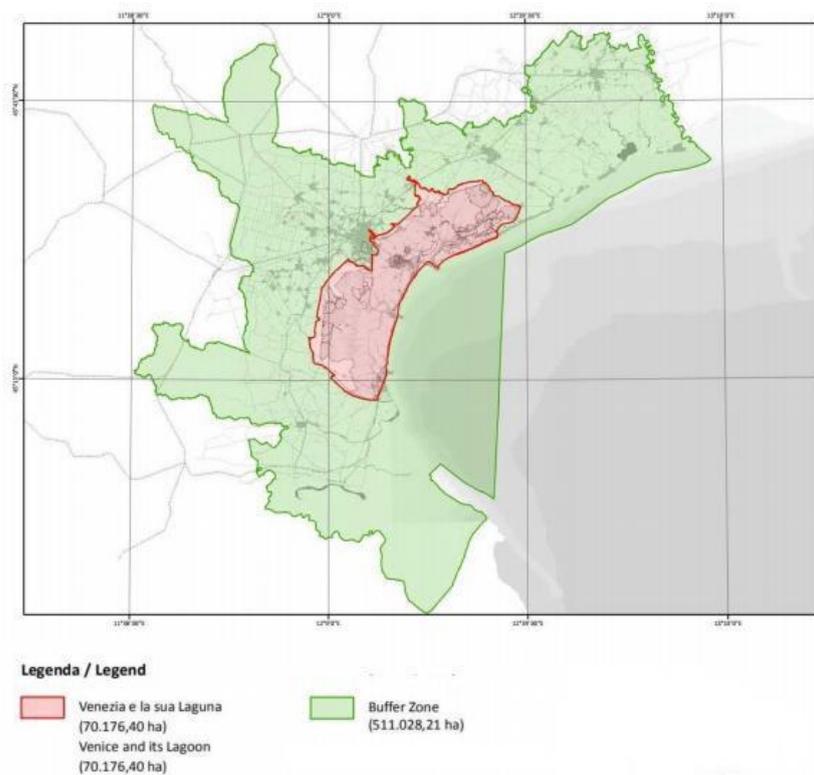
		International and Development Policies
	Danilo Gerotto	Director of Urban Planning and Territorial Development
	Simone Agrondi	Director of Public Works
	Katia Basili	Head of the Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
	Roberto di Bussolo	Head of Transports Office
	Elisabetta Piccin	Manager of Tourism and Territorial Control Office
	Elena Fregonese	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
	Chiara Colussi	Office of the World Heritage Property "Venice and its Lagoon"
Veneto Region	Salvina Sist	Director of Territorial Planning Directorate
	Giovanni Ulliana	Director of Special Projects for Venice – Environmental Reclamations and Special Law for Venice
	Giulio Bodon	Head of Culture Office- Coordination table Unesco sites in Veneto - SC technical referee
	Matteo Lizier	Head of Special Projects for Venice
	Serena Catullo	Special Projects for Venice
	Giuseppe Manoli	Territorial Planning Directorate
Metropolitan City of Venice	Massimo Pizzato	Head of Planning Office - SC technical referee
Province of Padua	Roberto Anzaldi	Head of Territorial Planning Office- SC technical referee - delegated by the President
	Cosetta Bernini	Territorial Planning Office - SC technical referee
Municipality of Cavallino Treporti	Gaetano di Gregorio	Head of Territorial Planning Office - SC technical referee
MiBACT - Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism	Francesca Riccio	Secretariat General – Sector I Coordination – UNESCO Office
MiBACT Regional Secretariat for Veneto	Michele Castelli	Safeguard Operational Unit - SC technical referee
	Emanuela Carpani	Superintendent

MIBACT -Superintendence for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of the City of Venice and its Lagoon-SABAP	Francesco Trovò	Head of Conservation Office - SC technical referee
North Adriatic Sea Port Authority – Ports of Venice and Chioggia	Antonio Revedin	Director of Strategic Planning and Development -SC technical referee
SAVE SpA	Davide Bassano	Director of Quality, Environment and Safety
Fondazione di Venezia	Giampietro Brunello	President Brief introduction to the Museum M9 as a key project for Mestre regeneration

ANNEX 7. Maps and photos



Map of the property "Venice and its Lagoon" (State Party, 2019)



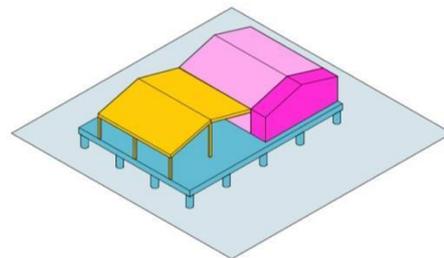
Map of proposed buffer zone (State Party, 2019)



Numerous privately-owned buildings are in a poor condition of maintenance (B. Furrer)



- **Piattaforma di sostegno**
 - Superficie massima: 150,00 mq
- **Tettoie**
 - Superficie coperta massima: 50 mq



Casone

- Superficie coperta massima: 45,00 mq
- Altezza massima: 3,00 m

La superficie coperta del casone potrà essere incrementata fino ad un massimo del 20% per lo svolgimento di attività complementari di tipo itturistico, così come disciplinate dalle disposizioni vigenti in materia.

Traditional self-made shelter of fisherman – project of new shelter (City of Venice)



Street vendor stands near Rialto bridge (Bernhard Furrer)



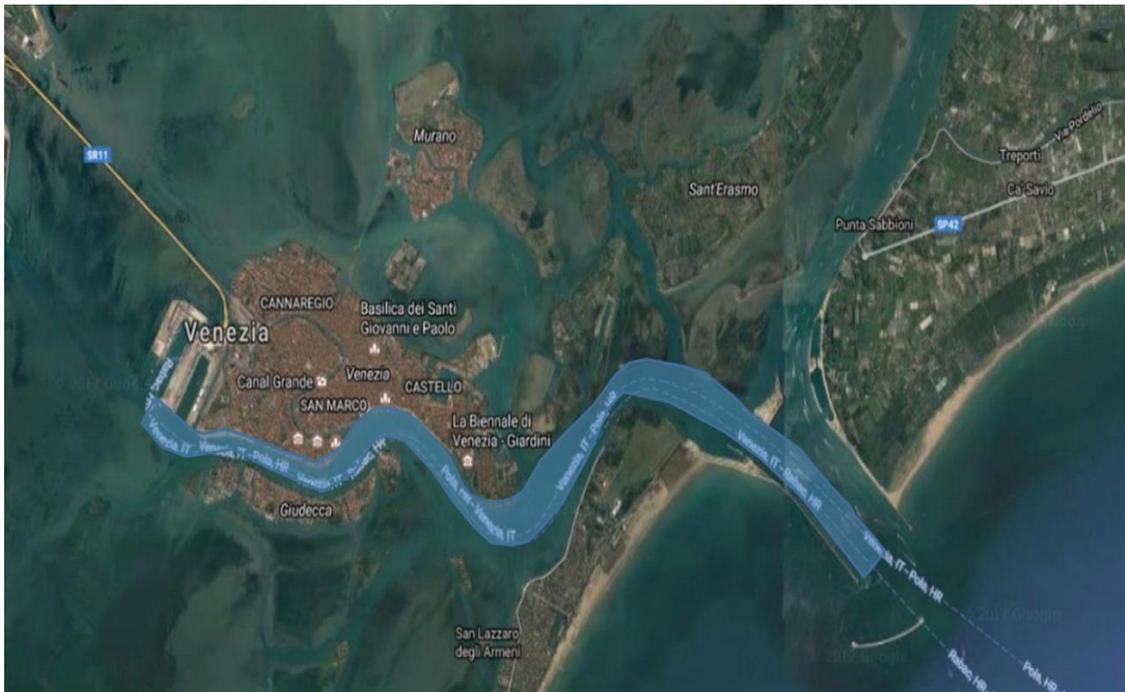
Street vendor stands near Rio Tera' Lista di Spagna (Réka Viragos)



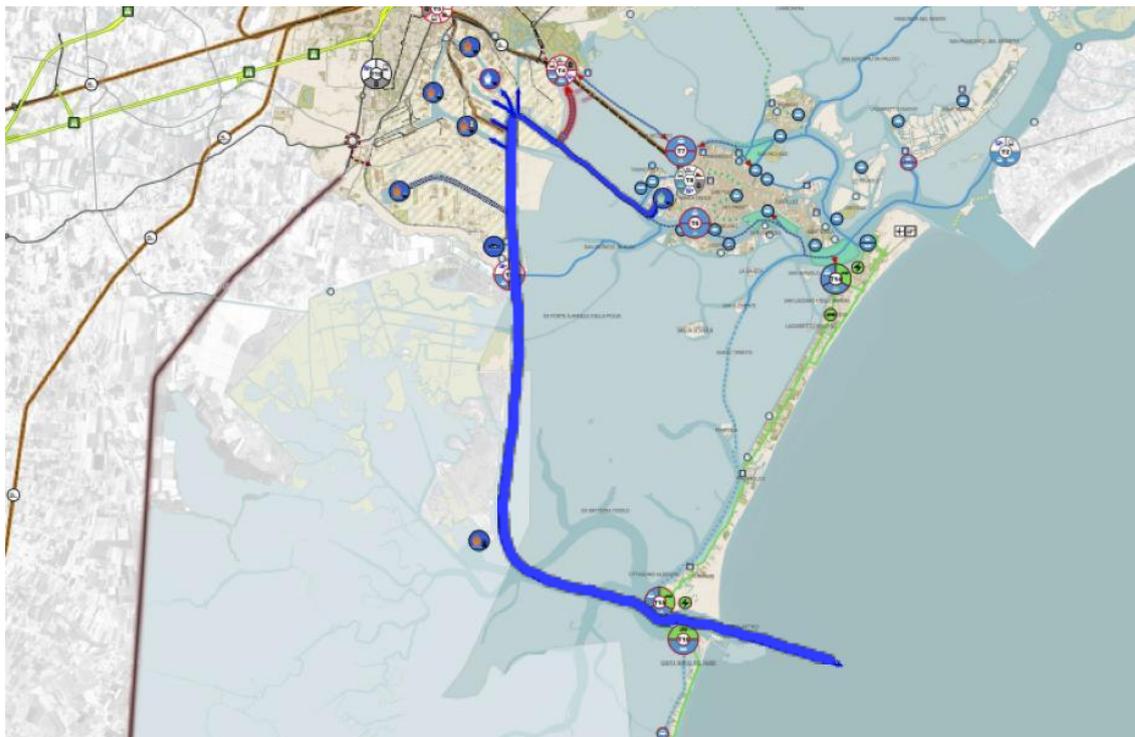
Mestre, the “Hybrid Tower” with its height that largely surpasses the townscape; an additional disturbing element is the huge publicity screen (Bernhard Furrer)



Rendering of the project Venus Venis, a 22 storeys high lighting fixture (Venus Venis)



The current course of all cruise ship from Boca di Lido via San Marco basin and Giudecca canal to the terminal of Venice (Capitaneria di Porto)



The proposed course of cruise ship (thick blue line) from Inlet Malamocco via the "petrol canal" to a provisional terminal in Marghera, for cruise ships under 40'000 gross register tons (thin blue line) via the Vittorio Emanuele III canal to the terminal of Venice (City of Venice)



Cruise ship Azamara Quest, a “small luxury cruiser” with 30.277 Gross-Tonnage (GT) in relationship with the World Heritage property (Port Authority of Venice and Chioggia)



In Porto Marghera very big new cruisers are built. They will reach the open sea by the “petrol canal” – when in function, they are not allowed to use the port (Réka Viragos)



The GLP deposit within the World Heritage property and in immediate vicinity of the city of Chioggia (Il Mattino di Padova _ 12 November 2019)



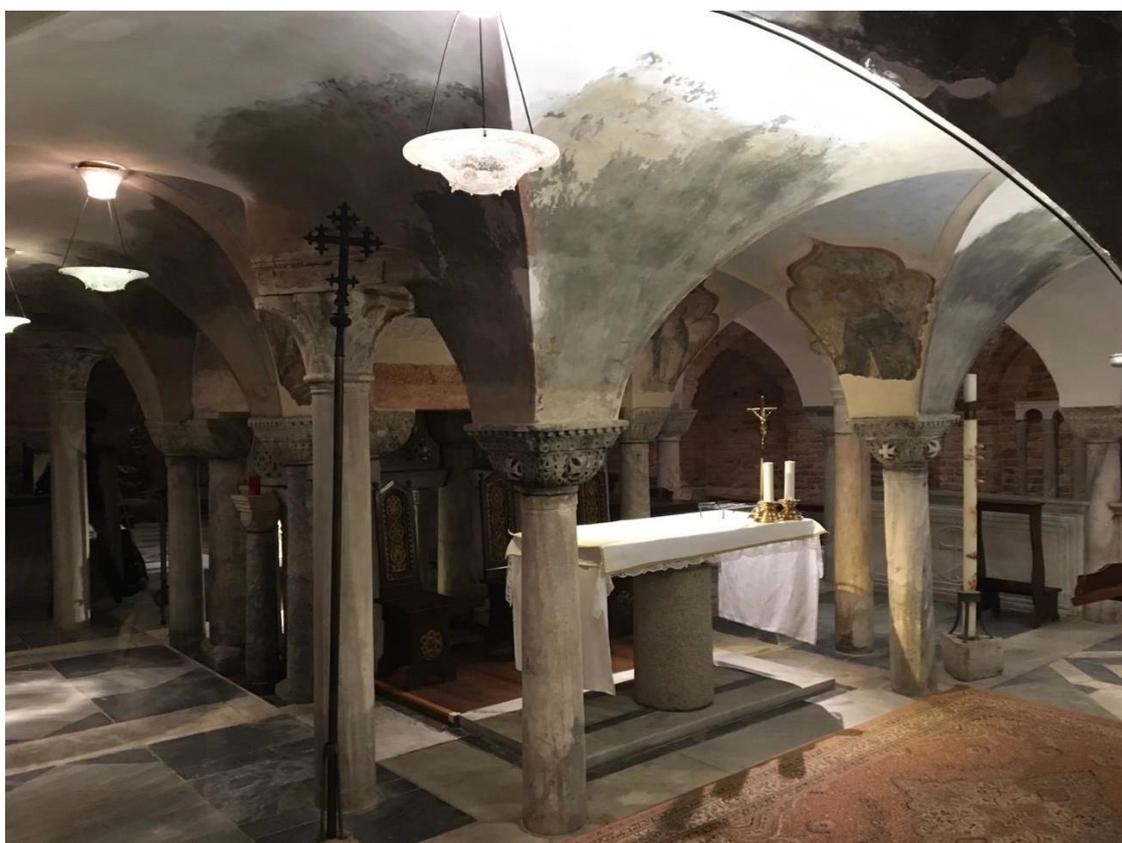
Mass tourism is overwhelming the islands of Venice (Ministry of Culture – alamy.de)



Smart Control Room (Bernhard Furrer)



Urban Waste collected in differentiated small handcarts is reloading by crane into a hydraulic compact container on a ship. (Bernhard Furrer)



Basilica di San Marco. The crypta flooded – and after drying, the input of salt can be recognised on almost all surfaces. (City of Venice, Bernhard Furrer)



Basilica di San Marco. Parts of the floor's surface with the mosaics have been raised; the mosaics are secured by a fleece paper (Bernhard Furrer)



Even if the barrier itself is hidden under the sea, all visible parts of the MoSe are very important elements in the landscape – in the Bocca di Lido an artificial island was built. (Consorzio Venezia Nuova)



The huge elements of the barrier give an impression of the gigantic effort connected with the MoSE (Consorzio Venezia Nuova)



Meeting of the mission's delegates with the Mayor (Municipality of Venice)



Meeting with the associations. Several of them didn't attend as they protested against the meeting's organisation by the Municipality (photographer unknown)