

# INTRODUCTION

The *ICOMOS World Report 2011–2013 on Monuments and Sites in Danger (Heritage at Risk)* is the latest volume of what is already a whole series of World Reports, starting in the year 2000 and followed by the volumes *H@R 2001/2002*, *H@R 2002/2003*, *H@R 2004/2005*, *H@R 2006/2007* and *H@R 2008–2010*. So far this series has also been complemented by three special editions: *H@R Special 2006 Underwater Cultural Heritage at Risk/Managing Natural and Human Impacts*, *H@R Special 2006 The Soviet Heritage and European Modernism*, and *H@R Special 2007 Cultural Heritage and Natural Disasters/Risk Preparedness and the Limits of Prevention*. As all the previous volumes the new *World Report 2011–2013* tries to fill a gap in ICOMOS' annual reporting. It implements at the same time Resolution 26 of the 16th General Assembly of ICOMOS in October 2008 in Quebec, which resolved to “request the *Heritage at Risk* Series to be continued and that actions be taken to enhance its communication and impact so as to support protection and conservation of the cultural heritage world-wide and to better serve ICOMOS and its Committees to define priorities and strategic goals”. The continuation of this successful series can also be regarded in connection with the initiative of President Gustavo Araoz of June 2010 to establish an ICOMOS Cultural Heritage Global Monitoring Network as “the logical outgrowth of our *Heritage@Risk* programme”.

The new *ICOMOS World Report 2011–2013* consists of contributions from 34 countries, among them (unfortunately only 18) reports from national or international committees of ICOMOS, but as usual there are also reports by individual experts and quotations from different expertises, statements, articles and press releases. The analysis of the reports shows that, apart from the general risks to heritage from natural disasters and physical decay of structures, there are certain patterns in human activity endangering our heritage, e. g. risks from war and inter-ethnic conflicts, risks from development, tourism or – very recently – the repercussions of the economic crisis on the cultural heritage sector in some European countries.

On the one hand, our built heritage has always been threatened by the consequences of earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, floods, and fires. Following the frequent disasters of the previous years earthquakes and their impacts also remain a central topic in this *Heritage at Risk* edition. There are reports on the earthquake in Emilia Romagna in Italy in 2012 (pp. 85 f.), including a short statement on L'Aquila five years after the earthquake of 2009 (pp. 86 f., see also *H@R 2008/2010*, pp. 109 f.), on the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami of 2011 in Japan (pp. 89–91), the Christchurch earthquake of 2011 in New Zealand (pp. 96–98), the Bohol earthquake of October 2013 in the Philippines (pp. 107–121), and a (delayed) report on the events of late 2010 in Kraljevo, Central Serbia (pp. 140–142). Among all natural hazards, fires can cause serious damage, as happened in 2012 at the Wangduephodrang Dzong, one of the most important Buddhist fortified monasteries in Bhutan (pp. 36–48). A special case are

the bushfires in Australia, which are most terrifying and possibly pose the greatest threat to life and property, like those of February 2009 across Victoria (see *H@R 2008–2010*, pp. 25 f.) and those of January 2013 in Eastern Tasmania (pp. 23–26). The Tasmanian fires are considered to be (one of) the results of the dramatic climate change (see the special focus on global climate change in *Heritage at Risk 2006/2007*, pp. 191–227); another consequence was the reported snow event of February 2012 in Urbino, in the Marche region of Italy (p. 87).

On the other hand, global climate change is a man-made disaster, in the same way as wars and ethnic or religious confrontations, which are still leading to tremendous losses: The reports included in this edition show the dramatic situation in Egypt (pp. 59–62), in Abkhazia, an occupied territory of Georgia (pp. 63 f.), or in Tunisia (pp. 148 f.), where the architectural heritage of the Soufi, especially the mausoleums, is threatened to be systematically destroyed. Serious damages to mausoleums, mosques and manuscript collections in Timbuktu in northern Mali were caused by attacks of Islamist rebels in May 2012 (pp. 94 f.); unfortunately, a detailed report was not available. The great concern about the safeguarding of the cultural heritage in Libya due to the unstable political situation is expressed in the statement of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (p. 92). The impact of the civil war on the cultural heritage in Syria was first documented in a comprehensive compilation of the disastrous damages prepared for the Global Heritage Fund in 2012 (pp. 143 f.). Since the beginning of the conflict the Blue Shield has issued two statements on the country's invaluable cultural heritage (2011, 2012, pp. 143 f.), and ICOMOS (one of the founding organisations of the Blue Shield) also expressed its deep concern about the ongoing destructions in two statements: the first on Aleppo's cultural heritage (July 2012, p. 144), the other on Crac des Chevaliers and the six World Heritage sites in Syria (July 2013, p. 145). As a result of the efforts to support Syrian professionals and experts by delivering knowledge, providing technical consultancy, raising awareness, and building capacity, ICOMOS, in cooperation with ICCROM and the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria (DGAM), and in coordination with UNESCO, succeeded in organising a first e-learning course for Syrian cultural heritage professionals at the Damascus National Museum in January 2013. The course was conducted by the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness (ICORP) (pp. 145 f.). Further seminars on additional subjects are envisaged, and in fact our *Heritage at Risk* reports are not only meant as an appeal to the public. Instead, our intention and hope is that on the basis of these reports and together with the National and International Committees of ICOMOS such pilot projects can be organised by our experts.

Part of such projects, but nevertheless a special case, are the measures taken by ICOMOS Germany after the destruction of the Giant Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan in 2001, implemented since 2002 thanks to funds provided by the German For-

eign Office and by UNESCO within the framework of Phase III of the Japan-Fund-In-Trust project ‘Safeguarding the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley’ (see *H@R 2008–2010*, Introduction, p. 12; see also the reports in *The Giant Buddhas of Bamiyan. Safeguarding the Remains, Monuments and Sites*, vol. XIX, Berlin 2009). Of the recent project interventions (based on the UNESCO Partners Agreement of July 10, 2013 with ICOMOS Germany) the reinforcement of the Lower Gallery in front of the Eastern Buddha niche is presented on pp. 14–17.

As already described in *H@R 2008–2010* (Introduction, p. 12), the rapid development all over the world in the 21st century, taking place under the pressures of population growth and progressive industrialisation, leads to ever-greater consumption of land, destroying not only archaeological evidence underground, but entire historic cultural landscapes. It also results in faster and faster cycles of demolition and new construction with their concomitant burden on the environment. Examples of such development pressures are the various dam projects, some of which were already mentioned in previous *Heritage at Risk* editions, e. g. Alliano, already flooded by the Yortanlı Dam, and Hasankeyf, soon to be flooded by the Ilisu Dam, both in Turkey (p. 150). There is also the dam project in Belo Monte, Brazil (p. 52), which will cause the displacement of thousands of indigenous people, or large-scale mining projects, such as the open-cast gold mining in Roşia Montana, Romania (p. 122), the copper mining in Mes Aynak, Afghanistan (p. 18), both encompassing the destruction of the ancient sites and the risk of environmental catastrophes for the respective cultural landscape; and finally the mining project in Sakdrisi, Georgia, which will destroy the oldest gold mine in the world (pp. 64–66). But also small-scale development pressures can produce tremendous losses, for instance the bulldozing of a pyramid in Peru (p. 106) or of several ancient tombs at the World Heritage site of Cyrene in northeastern Libya (pp. 92 f.) for selling the plots to developers. Other examples are the digging activities for new building and development projects, often revealing rich and important archaeological finds, at risk due to time pressures in connection with the project implementation, as happened in Thessalonica, Greece (p. 75) or in Niš, Serbia (p. 142).

Neglect is another source of possible deterioration or destruction. It applies to such archaeological sites as Ratiaria in Bulgaria (pp. 53–55) or Abu Mina in Egypt (pp. 60 f.) as well as to historic buildings no longer in use, as illustrated by the manor houses in Banat, Romania (pp. 126–131). In many countries not only the financial resources are unavailable to guide such developments in the direction of cultural continuity. Sometimes the political will is also missing, for instance if the extant legal regulations are not put to use, are weakened or even abolished. In Hungary the government started dismantling the entire 140-year-old monument preservation office system as early as in late 2010, dissolving the central institute, weakening the protection and conservation law and transferring all the heritage protection and conservation responsibilities to the district administration level in 2013 (p. 77). In some countries of the European Union the economic crisis of the last few years has had serious repercussions on the cultural heritage sector, as reported from Ireland (pp. 82–84) and Greece (p. 74), where the governments have reduced the cultural budget almost to zero and forced more than half of the experienced and specialised heritage conservationists to retire. Even in Germany, the government of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia at the beginning of 2013 decided to cut all public funding for the heritage sector and offer financial aid to owners by loans instead.

Fortunately, the decision of the government of the federal state of Berlin of summer 2013 to reduce public funding for the heritage sector by 40% in 2014 was cancelled.

With the *Heritage at Risk* initiative, ICOMOS is concerned with monuments and sites in the broadest sense: not only classic categories of monuments, like churches (see the reports on churches in Georgia, p. 63 and Romania, pp. 122–124), funerary heritage (Belgium, pp. 32–35) or fortresses (Győr, Hungary, pp. 76 f.), but also immovable and movable cultural properties, archaeological sites (see above), historic areas and ensembles, cultural landscapes (e. g. the Upper Middle Rhine Valley, Germany, pp. 67 f.; Greater Chaco Landscape, New Mexico, USA, pp. 152 f.), vernacular heritage (Sango City Oyo, Nigeria, pp. 99–105), or various types of historic evidence from prehistory up to the Modern Movement of the 20th century. All over the world historic urban districts suffer from careless, often totally unplanned renewal processes (compare reports on Sozopol and Nessebar, Bulgaria, pp. 55–57; Vienna and Salzburg, Austria, pp. 27–31; Historic Cairo, Egypt, p. 59). The built evidence of our industrial heritage is also in danger: these structures erected with modern technology and now themselves worthy of preservation cause difficulties for conservationists, examples being the famous Shukhov Radio Tower in Moscow (p. 132; see also *H@R 2008–2010*, p. 152) or testimonies of early railway constructions, such as the Circular Depot in Moscow (p. 134) and the cultural landscape of the World Heritage Semmering Railway (p. 31). And even architectural masterpieces of the Modern Movement of the 20th century are threatened with demolition or disfigurement (see reports on Melnikov’s House and Studio in Moscow, p. 133, mentioned already in *H@R 2008–2010*, p. 152; Scharoun’s Colour Row settlement, pp. 134–137, or the Kant-Garage in Berlin-Charlottenburg, p. 71), not to forget numerous examples of masterpieces from the second part of the last century in different parts of the world, such as the Central Covered Market in Yerevan, Armenia (pp. 20–22), the West Wing of the Central Government Offices in Hong Kong (p. 58), the International Congress Centre in Berlin (p. 72), the Prentice Women’s Hospital in Chicago (p. 153), the Astrodome in Houston, Texas (p. 155), or the Worldport Terminal at JFK Airport in New York (p. 156).

An essential task of ICOMOS within the framework of the World Heritage Convention of 1972 is our work as advisory body to the World Heritage Committee and to UNESCO on issues concerning the World Cultural Heritage. The mandate and function of the advisory bodies ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM result from articles 8 (3), 13 (7) and 14 (2) of the World Heritage Convention in connection with paragraphs 30 and 31 of the Operational Guidelines (OG). One of the responsibilities of the advisory bodies is *to monitor the state of conservation of World Heritage properties* (OG § 31). The role of ICOMOS is described in paragraph 35: *The specific role of ICOMOS in relation to the Convention includes: evaluation of properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List, monitoring the state of conservation of World Heritage cultural properties, reviewing requests for International Assistance submitted by State Parties, and providing input and support for capacity-building activities* (OG § 35). Looking at and reflecting upon the rather large number of World Heritage sites included in this volume of *Heritage at Risk*, which are facing threats from armed conflicts (Mali, Syria) or development pressures (Vienna, Salzburg, Upper Middle Rhine Valley), it is obvious that a continuous proactive observation should take place, a preventive monitoring which lies in the responsibility of the National Committees of ICOMOS (in special cases sup-

ported by the International Scientific Committees), in accordance with article 4 of the ICOMOS Statutes. Such preventive monitoring of course differs from the Periodic Reporting described in the Operational Guidelines (OG V, 199–210) and from Reactive Monitoring (OG IV.A, 169–176), as already explained in detail in the Introduction of the previous volume (see *H@R 2008–2010*, p. 13). Reactive Monitoring can only be applied in particularly serious cases; however the report on the Upper Middle Rhine Valley (pp. 67–69) is a good example of how the Reactive Monitoring procedure (initiated of course by the State Party, but under the consultancy of the German monitoring group) may produce positive results in solving serious problems.

Some years ago individual National Committees of ICOMOS developed special initiatives for the monitoring of the state of conservation of World Heritage sites in their countries, the German monitoring group being founded in 2001 (compare also *H@R 2006/2007*, pp. 62 f. and the Introduction to *H@R 2008–2010*, p. 13). Besides reporting on the state of conservation of the German World Heritage sites, since 2009 the group has played an important advisory role within the framework of the “Promotion of Investments into National UNESCO World Heritage Sites” initiated by the German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development. This programme has included about 200 projects; unfortunately, it will run out at the end of 2014. Such very positive examples could determine or even convince all National Committees of ICOMOS to attend to the task of Preventive Monitoring in the future. Based on the annual reports of all ICOMOS committees on the dangers and trends in conservation in their region, the *Heritage at Risk* initiative can serve as the data base for the already mentioned initiative of President Gustavo Araoz to establish a Global Monitoring Network: ICOMOS as a sort of general “monument watch” observing the state of conservation worldwide.

Together with all the previous volumes of *Heritage at Risk* the actual report may be able to give a certain overview of the dangers, problems and trends regarding the protection of monuments in the 21st century in different regions of the world. We are quite aware of the gaps in our work and of the limits to what we can do. However, in the years to come the *Heritage at Risk* initiative will not only need an improved financial base, but also the involvement of all ICOMOS committees with annual reports, collected by a press and information office to be installed at our International Secretariat in Paris. This office would compile all information and put statements by ICOMOS International on current risks on the ICOMOS website as fast as possible. Our deepest thanks are addressed to Gaia Jungeblodt, our director at the International Secretariat, who over the last years for our editorial work has collected all the relevant information, reports, press releases and comments on worldwide threats to heritage. Thanking all colleagues who have contributed to this publication and made their pictures available to us, we would also like to note that, in line with ICOMOS policy, the texts and information provided for this publication reflect the independent view of each committee and the different authors. At the secretariat of ICOMOS Germany in Munich, we would like to thank John Ziesemer, who was in charge of the editorial work and the English translations, and Ioana Cisek for her administrative work. Finally, we wish to extend our thanks to the German Federal Government Commissioner for Cultural Affairs and the Media who once again provided the necessary financial and organisational framework of this publication.

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