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World Heritage UK

October 2021's newsletter # 3



World Heritage UK's COP 26 statement

The UK's World Heritage Sites are at risk from climate change.

The UK is about to host the [26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties](#) (COP 26) in Glasgow on 31 October – 12 November 2021.

Following WHUK's annual conference 'Climate Change & World Heritage' in September, WHUK has issued the following statement, which will be sent to key attendees at COP26.

"WHUK calls upon the UK Government and all the leaders of signatory State Parties to the World Heritage Convention present at COP 26 to:

- take immediate action to protect their World Heritage Sites from the effects of the climate crisis
- incorporate the policy goals set out in UNESCO's "[Policy Document on](#)

- support and resource their World Heritage Sites better to address the challenges of the climate emergency

The Climate Emergency is the most pressing issue facing humanity. The IPCC Working Group I report, [*Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis*](#), published earlier this year, emphasised that the situation is now critical across the globe and that further urgent action must be taken now.

WHUK, which represents all the UK's 33 World Heritage Sites, fully recognises the need for urgent integrated, transformational action across the whole of society to address the situation. Without this, it will not be possible to meet the Paris Agreement target of limiting global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. So it should be a matter of national pride that UK Sites are already responding to the climate emergency by taking action both to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Aside from the ethical imperative to take action, there are practical reasons for Sites to respond, not least of which is that the climate emergency and associated ecological collapse is already a threat to World Heritage Sites and the communities which live in and around them. Sites are therefore seeking better to understand how they can reduce their individual impacts and adapt to changing circumstances. In turn, their action is helping the UK Government reach its net zero targets. Some Sites are going further. They are normally visited by many thousands of visitors each year, so many are considering how to educate their visitors about the climate emergency. Much of the climate emergency work – research, action and education - is done in partnership with many other sectors, an example that governments should follow. Overall, World Heritage Sites should be viewed as part of the solution, rather than a barrier, to addressing the climate change emergency.

Sites cannot alone address the issues raised by the climate emergency. They require additional Government support to enable them play their full part in reaching net zero targets. The obligation for assistance stems from the UNESCO "*Convention on World Cultural and Natural Heritage*" (1972) (the "World Heritage Convention") and its Operational Guidelines. These set out the key duties and obligations of national governments, as States Party signatories, to do all that they can to ensure the conservation, protection, presentation, and transmission to future generations of World Heritage properties situated on their territories. The requirement to conserve cultural, natural, or built heritage is now going to require engagement with climate breakdown in order simply to meet the most basic of these objectives.

for ratification in November 2021) elaborates the action that is needed. It is essential that the policy goals set out in that document are incorporated into national policy, strategy and action plans if World Heritage Sites are to play as full a part as possible in addressing the climate emergency."

Click here for WHUK's [World Heritage and Climate Change](#) webpage.



"Serial transnational World Heritage Nominations and properties: Challenges and prospects" webinar

Serial transnational World Heritage nominations are remarkable examples of cooperation and dialogue and even solidarity. On the other hand, they are becoming increasingly frequent and complex. These sites mobilize a great deal of energy and pose challenges for managers, national authorities, as well as for the World Heritage Centre and advisory bodies.

Belgium, through its participation in various transnational serial sites, has acquired valuable experience in this field. In the framework of its candidacy to the World Heritage Committee, it wishes to encourage dialogue between the various stakeholders to foster mutual understanding and respect, to identify common issues, and also to address specific challenges of these actors.

p.m. (Paris time), during which representatives of the World Heritage Centre, advisory bodies, national representatives, focal points and managers from all over the world will share their vision and experiences, discuss questions and talk about expectations.

Click [here](#) to register for this webinar. The full programme is:

1:00 p.m.	Introduction	H.E. Régine Vandriessche, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Belgium to UNESCO	10'
1:10 p.m.	UNESCO World Heritage Centre	Luba Janikova, UNESCO World Heritage Centre	10'
1:20 p.m.	Advisory body - ICOMOS	Gwenaëlle Bourdin/ Regina Durighello, ICOMOS	20'
1:40 p.m.	Case Study #1 (<i>cultural property</i>): The architectural work of Le Corbusier, an outstanding contribution to the Modern Movement	Bénédicte Gandini, Architect, Fondation Le Corbusier, France	15'
1:55 p.m.	Case Study #2 (<i>natural</i>): Ancient and primeval beech forests of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe	Anna Kovarovics, E.C.O., Austria and Caroline Celis, Coordination office of the series, Belgium	15'

2:10 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone circles of Senegambia (Senegal, Gambia) — Seydou Nourou Kane, Senegal Cultural Heritage office • Prehistoric pile dwellings around the Alps (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland) – Karim Gernigon, Gilles Soubigou, Barbara Fath, International coordination group UNESCO Palafittes • Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru) — Victoria Sosa, Coordination office of the series, Argentina • Frontiers of the Roman Empire: the Lower German Limes (Germany, Netherlands) — Tamar Leene, Programme manager Limes, the Netherlands. 	45'
2:55 p.m.	Conclusion	H.E. Régine Vandriessche, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Belgium to UNESCO

Simultaneous interpretation (French — English) will be provided.

The UK's two transnational WHSs are the [Frontiers of the Roman Empire](#) (Hadrian's Wall and the Antoine Wall) and the [Great Spa Towns of Europe](#) (City of Bath).



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