



Hungary

Candidate to the World Heritage Committee 2017

Hungary is a State Party to the 1972 World Heritage Convention since 1985 with experience in the preparation of Serial and Transnational nomination files and in the management of transboundary - both cultural and natural - properties. Hungary was member of the World Heritage Committee once, between 1997-2003.



*As World Heritage Committee
Member Hungary would
give priority to:*

- Supporting Underrepresented Geographical Regions
- Safeguarding Cultural and Natural Heritage
- Supporting the World Heritage Fund

Supporting Underrepresented Geographical Regions

- by improving the geographical distribution of sites on the World Heritage List and
- by supporting and encouraging the implementation of the Committee's decisions

The Africa Region is direly underrepresented, as it accounts for merely 9% of all World Heritage properties. Furthermore African sites make up for 37% of the World Heritage List in danger as many sites are located in areas of conflict. This is why Hungary attaches the utmost importance and provides financial support to the creation of "Heritage Passports" that helps awareness raising among the local community.

Hungary has financed several projects in West and Central Africa, aiming at supporting conservation and rehabilitation. The projects that are currently being carried out in Nigeria, Congo, Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Burkina Faso are aiming at realizing activities that fall within the scope of the strategy of implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the Africa region.

The Diy-Gid-Biy of Mandara Mountains - Republic of Cameroon



To cite an example, the Government of Hungary is providing emergency support to restore tangible and intangible cultural values of Sukur Cultural Landscape in Nigeria, as requested by the Committee during its 40th Session by financing a project that aims to restore and maintain the features and attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the site through restoration of traditional stone buildings and rebuilding of demolished community structures such as primary health care centres and primary schools.

Safeguarding Cultural and Natural Heritage

- by promoting the implementation of the World Heritage Convention
- by supporting activities that positively impact and benefit local communities and
- by safeguarding the credibility of the World Heritage Committee

Hungary's World Heritage Law has been praised as a good example not only of the inclusion of World Heritage-specific concepts into national legislation, but also of management and assessment practices that benefit the sustainable, long-term conservation of properties¹. The Hungarian Act LXXVII of 2011 on World Heritage provides a solid legal and institutional basis for the efficient implementation of the World Heritage Convention and ensures the effective management of Hungarian World Heritage sites and supports the protection of their OUV, in line with the principles of sustainable development.

One of the key focal points of Hungary's foreign policy that also ties in our efforts for the promoting the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is combatting the persecution of Christians and helping the affected communities on the ground. Keeping in spirit with this commitment, Hungary is actively supporting the ongoing efforts in conserving ancient Christian manuscripts in Iraq, including those saved at the onset of the takeover of Mosul by Daesh.



Old Village of Hollókő and its Surroundings

To cite but a few examples:

- the Hungarian Government is currently providing 1 685 000 USD towards the restoration of over 30 churches in Lebanon
- it has been the second financial contributor - after Palestine - to the restoration project of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and
- has given 100 000 EUR to the reconstruction of the Aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem



Supporting the World Heritage Fund

- by a three-year financial framework agreement signed in 2016 and
- by striving towards finding realistic long-term solutions to bring back the Fund to an optimal level

Hungary has been supporting the World Heritage Fund not only by contributing through a three-year financial framework agreement aiming at supporting the implementation of the Convention and the decisions of the Committee in the Africa region, but by consistently paying its assessed contribution in full, during the first months of the year. We are fully committed to continue the excellent work done by the Committee so far in pursuing a World Heritage Fund that operates on an optimal level.



Professor Zsolt Visy, head of delegation

He is professor of archaeology at University of Pécs, professor emeritus, till 2011 head of the Department of Archaeology, between 1996-1999 dean, then between 1998-2000 deputy secretary for culture of the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage, and managing director of the Hungarian World Heritage Committee. He has been active in the field of archaeology since 1967, his major field of research is the history and archaeology of the Roman Empire and Pannonia, military- and limes history, Early Christian archaeology.

He has published six books and around three hundred studies in Hungarian and foreign languages. He has been Professor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences since 2002. He has been vice-president of the ICOMOS Hungarian National Committee and was chairman of the Cultural Committee of the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO between 2012-2016. Zsolt Visy is member of several international organizations protecting heritage sites, between 2009-2012 he was the European vice-president of the International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM). He was visiting professor at the Jagiellonian University, Cracow, the universities of Graz, Heidelberg, Emory University, Atlanta, GA lecturing in the subject of Roman cultural heritage. As Head of the Department of Archaeology he founded the Aerial Archaeology Collection and worked out heritage manager qualification and the program of the academic archaeology qualification.

In 2011 he was awarded for his activity with the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary. He excavated in the Early Christian cemetery (Cella septichora) in Sopianae, the Roman settlement in the territory of the city of Pécs inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000. He is a founding member of the Bratislava Group, working on the expansion of the World Heritage Site "Frontiers of the Roman Empire". He is working as a founding member, from 2008 as chairman of the Hungarian Limes Association preparing the Hungarian segment of World Heritage application Danube Limes World Heritage Project. At present he is the ministerial commissioner of the "Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Danube Limes in Hungary" World Heritage Nomination Site application documentation.



Hungary in a nutshell

The country is situated *in the heart of Europe, at the crossroad between East and West*. The finno-ugrian or Turkish origin of the Hungarians has been a subject of debate for centuries.

Hungary has a long and rich, *over a thousand years old history*, and due to its geographical location its culture reflects Turkish, Roman, Slavic and other influences. As a result, it has strong historical and cultural ties to the surrounding nations and to this day it is *a place of harmonious coexistence of different ethnicities*.

The landscape is similarly diverse, featuring *gently sloping hills and mountains, fertile plains and meandering rivers with abundant wildlife*. Though a landlocked country, it is home to the *largest lake in central Europe, Lake Balaton*, and has *excessive thermal water resources* with spa towns built over them.

The long-standing traditions of the *characteristic Hungarian gastronomy and wine culture* - considered our national asset - inspire a great number of *thematic food and wine festivals* all over the country all year round.

Thanks to its unparalleled geographical location and exceptional attributes, *Budapest, also called the Pearl of the Danube* has become one of Europe's most popular capital cities. A World Heritage site, stretching along the banks of the Danube, the two sides – Buda and Pest - represent two different characters of the city: *historic Buda* offers such sites as the medieval Castle Hill, while the *young and dynamic Pest* side boasts the *second largest parliament building in Europe*.

Hungary ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1985, and created a World Heritage Law in 2011 to help and ensure the implementation of the Convention. Our country has *eight listings on the World Heritage List*, including both natural and cultural sites.

Hortobágy National Park - the Puszta



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