



The 5th International NGO Forum on World Heritage at Risk

Ramada City Center Hotel, Manama, 22 - 23 June 2018

We, the Civil Society Organizations who have attended the 5th International NGO Forum on World Heritage at Risk organized by World Heritage Watch on 22-23 June 2018 in Bahrain, coming from 24 countries in 6 continents, as active and concerned citizens dealing with Natural and Cultural World Heritage properties at different places, would like to bring the following to the attention of the World Heritage Committee:

Resolution

On Curonian Spit (Russian Federation) (№ 994)

In 2016, the State of Conservation Report for the property included:

- A statement that “there were no cases of illegal construction within the Russian part of the property”; and
- Raised concerns about the destruction of sea coast and foredune, noting the report did not fully reflect the seriousness of the problem.

Since early 2000s regular foredune repair and restoration activities had significantly decreased.

The 2016 State of Conservation Report, however, did not address the following concerns impacting the OUV of the property:

- eutrophication of the Curonian Lagoon
- unsustainable levels of recreation use; and
- lack of environmental assessment for infrastructure projects.

In addition, along the coast of the Baltic Sea, in the immediate vicinity of the Curonian Spit, oil companies continue to drill for oil (D6) near to the property. They are undertaking exploratory and preparatory work at nearby offshore fields, and are currently constructing a terminal for receiving tankers carrying liquefied natural gas.

WHW asks the World Heritage Committee to amend the draft decision regarding Curonian Spit, noting that

1. 15 illegal construction sites persist in the property in 2018, and no effective plans or steps exist to dismantle any illegal buildings or stop further construction;

2. in 2017 a storm led to the Curonian Spit beaches losing a layer of sand up a meter and a half deep, the foredune was destroyed all along the Spit and since the damage, no effective restoration efforts have occurred;
3. insufficient capacity of wastewater treatment facilities in the three nearby settlements has led to eutrophication the Curonian Lagoon;
4. the extremely high recreational pressure impacting the ecosystems of the Curonian Spit (for example, during summer, 1800 visitor cars per day were registered with only 600 parking places available);
5. investment projects are implemented on the Curonian Spit without taking into consideration its status (for example, a hydro-technical coastal protective project was constructed in 2017 in a vulnerable area of the Spit without any environmental impact assessment); and
6. the steps taken by the administration of the National Park and the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation are ineffective, insufficient and do not address the problems threatening the OUV of the property.

Manama, 23 June 2018