



Extended 44th Session of the World Heritage Committee

Oral statement on 7B.50 Venice and its Lagoon

On behalf of six civil society organizations of Venice, including Delegazione FAI di Venezia, We are here Venice, Cittadini per l'Aria, Tutta la Città Insieme, L.i.p.u. Venezia and WWF Venezia e territorio,

we deeply deplore the decision taken by the World Heritage Committee not to place Venice and its Lagoon on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The recent decision of the Italian State Party on cruise ships solved only one of a plethora of problems threatening the property. Big ships are still allowed through the delicate lagoon and moor in the Port of Marghera, and their excessive environmental and climate impacts will continue. Shunting the big ships out of sight will still exacerbate the problems of erosion in the lagoon, and this could weaken both the buildings and the fabric of our town which binds us all together.

The persistent issues afflicting the precarious state of conservation of Venice and its Lagoon have long been associated with a complex and ineffective governance framework. It lacks a long-term vision and strategy involving the local community in order to preserve the Site's OUVs and its attributes, address tourism management, optimize the use of valuable cultural and natural resources, control infrastructure and urban development projects, and reverse the dramatic demographic decline of the Venice population specifically.

No mechanism has been established yet to comply with Paragraph 118 bis or notify the World Heritage Centre of proposals according to Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. As a result, projects that will have negative impacts on the OUV of Venice and its Lagoon are being implemented - even in the future buffer zone. The continued effects of certain activities on Venice and the vulnerable Lagoon ecosystem, combined with climate change, are already causing irreversible changes to the site.

The Committee has missed a chance to uphold the credibility of the World Heritage List and to trigger the State Party to engage in the vital discussions with civil society and timely actions that the site so desperately needs.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.