

Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego

Sekretarz Stanu
Generalny Konserwator Zabytków
Bożena Żelazowska

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Warszawa, 29 stycznia 2024 r.

Pan
Jacek Majchrowski
Prezydent Miasta Krakowa

Szanowny Panie Prezydencie,

uprzejmie informuję, że do Ministerstwa Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego wpłynęła korespondencja zaadresowana do Pani Minister Marty Cienkowskiej, w formie petycji wyrażającej sprzeciw wobec budowy kładki pieszo-rowerowej na Wiśle, łączącej dzielnice: Kazimierz i Ludwinów.

Sprawa została przekazana do nadzorowanego przeze mnie Departamentu Ochrony Zabytków z uwagi na fakt, iż do korespondencji dołączono m.in. pismo komitetu obywatelskiego „Bulwary to My” z 29 grudnia 2023 roku, skierowane do Dyrektora Centrum Światowego Dziedzictwa UNESCO (załączam list w wersji angielskiej).

Polska jest stroną Konwencji Ochrony Światowego Dziedzictwa UNESCO 1972, a w związku z tym przyjmuje na siebie zobowiązanie ochrony miejsc wpisanych na Listę UNESCO. W sprawie przedmiotowej inwestycji, w 2018 roku została wydana opinia przez Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa, któremu powierzono kwestie związane z wdrażaniem ww. konwencji. Opinia ta, którą przekazuję również w załączeniu, jest w sposób niepozostawiający wątpliwości negatywna w sprawie realizacji inwestycji w zaplanowanej formie. Wskazuje bowiem na zagrożenie utratą wyjątkowej uniwersalnej wartości miejsca w przypadku, gdyby projekt ten został zrealizowany w strefie buforowej historycznego centrum Krakowa, wpisanego na Listę światowego dziedzictwa w 1978 roku.

Zważywszy na złożoność takich miejsc historycznych, jak Kraków i inne ośrodki miejskie wpisane na Listę, nowe inwestycje wymagają wyjątkowej ostrożności i uwzględnienia zespołu różnych czynników przed podjęciem ostatecznej decyzji. Obserwujemy w ostatnich latach decyzje, które miały wpływ na skreślenie niektórych miast z Listy z uwagi na utratę ich wyjątkowych uniwersalnych wartości, jak to miało miejsce w przypadku Drezna i Liverpoolu. Kontrowersje wzbudzały także inwestycje realizowane w miastach UNESCO na terytorium Polski, np. w Toruniu i we Wrocławiu (ostatnie z miast zostanie w najbliższym czasie poddane audytowi Misji monitorującej UNESCO z uwagi na budowę Alei Wielkiej Wyspy).

Przekazując Panu Prezydentowi informację w sprawie skargi komitetu obywatelskiego „Bulwary to My”, wystosowanej do Centrum Światowego Dziedzictwa, chciałabym zwrócić uwagę na realne zagrożenie dla miejsca UNESCO i możliwe konsekwencje w postaci misji monitorującej. Ponadto chciałabym także uczulić Pana Prezydenta na szczególną sytuację Polski w odbiorze międzynarodowym. Pojawiające się w ostatnich latach coraz liczniej

Informacja dotycząca zasad przetwarzania danych osobowych przez Ministra Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego oraz praw osób, których dane są przetwarzane została zamieszczona na stronie <http://bip.mkidn.gov.pl> W zakładce ochrona danych osobowych.

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negatywne opinie o naszym kraju w kontekście ochrony wartości UNESCO, również skargi naszych obywateli wysyłane bezpośrednio do Centrum, wpływają alarmująco na wizerunek Polski jako Państwa-Strony Konwencji 1972.

Po otrzymaniu pisma komitetu obywatelskiego „Bulwary to My” Dyrektor Centrum Światowego Dziedzictwa UNESCO zwrócił się z prośbą o opinię Państwa Strony w tej sprawie. W związku z tym, będę bardzo zobowiązana Panu Prezydentowi za uwzględnienie wszystkich okoliczności przy podejmowaniu dalszych decyzji związanych z przedmiotową inwestycją Miasta i przekazanie informacji o dalszym jej etapie, szczególnie w kontekście zagrożeń dla wyjątkowej uniwersalnej wartości Miejsca. Z uwagi na fakt, że sprawa toczy się od wielu lat, będę wdzięczna za przekazanie informacji w możliwie pilnym terminie.

Z wyrazami szacunku

Bożena Żelazowska

Załączniki:

Załącznik 1 - opinia NID

Załącznik 2 - pismo do Dyrektora Światowego Centrum UNESCO

Załącznik 3 - pismo z WHC

Do wiadomości:

Pani Marta Cienkowska, Podsekretarz Stanu w MKiDN

Pani Urszula Śluzak, Dyrektor Departamentu Współpracy z Zagranicą

Mr Mariusz Lewicki
Permanent Deiegate of the Republic of
Poland to UNESCO
Maison de l'UNESCO

19 January 2024

Culture Sector
World Heritage Centre

Ref: CLT/WHC/EUR/24/14602

Dear Sir,

I wish to inform you that the World Heritage Centre has received third-party information expressing concerns about the state of conservation of the World Heritage property **'Historic Centre of Kraków'**.

In particular, the information received concerns reported planned construction of a footbridge across the Vistula River, which would be located at the edge of the property and in its buffer zone.

In accordance with Paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, please find attached the information received to enable the World Heritage Centre to verify, with your competent authorities, its contents and provide them with the opportunity to share their comments, which I would be grateful to receive at their earliest convenience.

I thank you for your continuous collaboration and support in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and remain,

Lazare Eloundou Assomo
Director

Enc.: Annex: incoming third-party information concerning the World Heritage property
'Historie Centre of Kraków'

cc: Polish National Commission for UNESCO
National Focal Point for the implementation of the Convention
ICOMOS International

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organization
7, Place de Fontenoy 75352 Paris 07 SP France
T: +33 (0)1 45 68 13 63

Annex

Third party information concerning the World Heritage property 'Historie Centre of Kraków', received by the World Heritage Centre on 5 October 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of "Bulwar to My", a grass-roots movement of residents of the First District in Kraków, which has been registered on the UNESCO list for the last 45 years, we would like to ask for your help and advice on an urgent heritage matter laid out below. After numerous attempts to reach the local UNESCO committee - which has not been responding to emails or phone calls, we are unsure if that department is even functional and are therefore eager to connect to the international UNESCO experts. As you may or may not know, the City of Kraków has re-launched and is rushing a controversial investment of building a footbridge (designed in 2006) across the river.

The investment, deemed unnecessary by many, will further lead to a degradation of a vital green area in the historie centre of town, be inaccessible in its entirety to people with mobility limitations and potentially deeply affect the historie panorama of the area. The last point was emphasized by the National Heritage Institute, but was ignored by the city. There have been ongoing protests against the investment reaching back to 2018. There have even been voices who claim that it might result in removing Kraków from the heritage list, in a similar way to the Dresden case in 2009. We take this matter very seriously and would like to ask for your urgent response on the matter.

Please find a link to the visual rendition of the footbridge:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15iPmtXV0uFd2BuYgHNzB5voj2TufyD0j/view>.

We are happy to supply more information if needed to a designated person.

Kraków, December 29th 2023

The Civic Committee of the Legislative Initiative
„Bulwar to My" ("Boulevard is Us")
bulwartomy@gmail.com

Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo
Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Dear Mr. Director Assomo,

We, the residents of Krakow's district of "Kazimierz" are deeply connected by the Vistula Boulevards, a precious sanctuary in our neighborhood. This unique space, embracing the Vistula River on one side and bordered by the Basilica "na Skalce" (Basilica of St. Michael the Archangel) and the Wawel Castle on the other, serves as an oasis of greenery and tranquility. It might be small, but it holds immense significance for us, our animal companions, and it stands as a near-final refuge for birds and flora. The Boulevard, flanked by a canopy of magnificent ancient maple trees, has fostered an exceptional microclimate - a biological and mental haven that we all deeply cherish. Amidst the urban bustle, it remains a haven, preserving a sense of coolness and peace.

However, our haven is under threat. For years, plans have loomed over a substantial part of this area to construct a pedestrian-cyclist bridge named "Kazimierz-Ludwinów"(henceforth referred to as: the footbridge). This project, created seventeen years ago (2006)by the _____, entails a massive structure comprising three platforms soaring 16 meters high. The design is not only dated but also seems incompatible and potentially harmful to the historic fabric of our district. Critical elements of the footbridge include enormous access ramps alongside the Inflancki Boulevard. Expert opinions from dendrologists like Dr. _____ (Kraków University of Technology), landscape architect Prof. _____ (University of Agriculture), and chiropterologist Dr. _____ (Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals, Polish Academy of Sciences) unanimously warn of dire consequences. They foresee a threat to the venerable maple trees, anticipating their gradual demise. Additionally, it is feared that the construction would disrupt bat migration paths and feeding habitats.

For us, the residents, this footbridge spells the end of our last green sanctuary and leisure space in "Kazimierz." It is more than just a recreational spot; it is a space that fosters neighborhood bonds and community cohesion.

The Inflancki Boulevard holds significant value for both Kraków residents and tourists, serving not only leisure but also as a historical site due to its proximity to the Basilica "na Skalce" and Wawel, both pivotal to our cultural heritage. The proposed footbridge would profoundly disrupt the panorama of the Old City, a site listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This concern was highlighted in a 2008 visual study by [redacted], emphasizing the potential reduction in the visibility of the city's historical profile and landscape, particularly when viewed from points along the Vistula River's embankments on its right side. Importantly, this study referred to the footbridge's original planned location, which was even further from the Basilica "na Skalce" and Wawel Hill, but was subsequently shifted downstream towards the castle by several dozen meters due to the Kraków Canal construction project.

In a negative assessment from the National Heritage Institute (responsible for monument protection and conservation standards, including issuing expert opinions and monitoring heritage threats, though disregarded by Kraków city authorities) in 2018, the footbridge's projected construction was deemed to have an "extremely broad" visual impact on the Vistula River valley landscape. The report stressed the importance of prioritizing preservation efforts that conserve the city's urban layout, development scale, cityscape, individual building heritage, and meeting modern economic and living needs, while minimizing disruptions to the existing urban fabric.

Professor [redacted], the Provincial Conservator of Monuments for Lesser Poland, revoked the conservation permit allowing the footbridge's construction in 2020 based on this evaluation. Regrettably, the arguments supporting this decision were dismissed by city authorities, leading to its reversal at the central level.

Additionally, the current spatial development plan for the "Vistula Boulevards II" area presents requisites that the planned footbridge fails to meet. These include aspects such as the horizontal structural layout, adaptation of its design in compliance with surrounding historic structures, consideration of visual axes connections, and significant views of Wawel Hill and the Pauline Monastery complex "na Skalce." Although this plan remains pending approval, it demonstrates the contradiction between the investment and the city's developmental blueprints.

The stance of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee concerning the proposed investment within the designated area remains unresolved. The Polish committee declined to participate, despite requests from both Kraków authorities and our Initiative. We are deeply concerned that a scenario reminiscent of Dresden might unfold, where similar circumstances led to its delisting from the UNESCO Heritage Sight list. Notably, this happened despite the Dresden bridge addressing pressing transportation issues and receiving overwhelming support in a referendum. In contrast, the City of Kraków has not conducted public consultations or performed a thorough benefit analysis. Construction is slated to begin despite residents' documented opposition since 2018, and the District I Council's critical viewpoint. It is pivotal to emphasize that the Mayor's argument regarding the "positive impact on tourist activity in the surrounding area" dates back to 2008 and seems inappropriate today. Constructing this footbridge would only usher in streams of tourists through the

residential quarter of Kazimierz, home to preschools, schools, and a cultural center, besides the historic Basilica "na Skalce." For us, the residents, this footbridge serves no purpose. The earmarked construction area is utilized by residents for leisure and relaxation in an unbuilt space. There is no substantiated claim that residents from other parts of Kraków require it, especially considering the proximity of neighboring bridges (Grunwaldzki Bridge and Piłsudski Bridge) at distances of 400 and 600 meters.

In an era where societies prioritize accessibility for seniors and those with limited mobility, planning a structure hindering access to its primary scenic feature—a pathway serving a scenic function as a continuous flight of stairs—seems out of sync. In the 21st century, no structure should exclude the most vulnerable. The response from the architectural bureau representative, citing the inaccessibility of the medieval Mariacka Tower to wheelchair users in discussions on accessibility, requires no further commentary.

It is important to note that the local residents have systematically opposed this initiative since 2018, undertaking among other measures, all available measures of resistance:

- An open letter to the City Mayor, which has garnered nearly 1200 signatures.
- A legislative initiative, signed by almost 700 in four days.
- Support from urban activist associations, the Society for Nature Conservation, and the Civil Dialogue Commission for Environmental Affairs, along with representatives from independent scientific institutions was entailed.
- A civic resolution project received a positive opinion from the Infrastructure Committee of the Kraków City Council, yet the Mayor and the Municipal Investment Board disregarded the stance.
- Support from the media, irrespective of political affiliations.

However, our resolve to preserve this enchanting corner of Krakow remains unwavering. We urgently seek Your assistance in conducting a comprehensive analysis of the proposed "Construction of the Kazimierz-Ludwinów Pedestrian-Cycling Bridge." This analysis is crucial to evaluate its potential impact on areas listed in both the registry of monuments and the UNESCO World Heritage List. The outcome will be pivotal in shielding our city from the grave repercussions of potential delisting from UNESCO. We are readily available to address any further inquiries, we send a visualization of the planned bridge in an additional folder.

With utmost respect,

The Civic Committee of the Legislative Initiative
"Boulevard is Us"