

Video Conference UNESCO – ICOMOS – BMEIA – BKA – City of Vienna

First of all let me thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you at this meeting, thank you Peter Brezovszky for organising this video conference, thanks to all the many participants taking part in it.

On behalf of the City of Vienna I would like to thank UNESCO and ICOMOS for the Report on the Advisory Mission to the Historic Centre of Vienna. It is an important and very comprehensive report, containing a lot of recommendations, which we are now carefully and thoroughly analysing.

Interestingly enough, a lot of tasks and recommendations suggested in this report are directed at the State Party, such as the advice that the Federal Government, as signatory to the Convention, should enter into negotiations with the developer as well as develop mitigation measures for the project to reduce the negative impact.

The mission further recommends that the State Party should define socio-cultural and economic benefits resulting from the Heumarkt Project. The City of Vienna is very interested in this report because we are aiming at the best solution for the people living in Vienna. And we are willing to cooperate closely with the Federal Government, representing the State Party, in this matter and on the whole subject in general.

This suggests that a lot of working sessions and discussions lay ahead of all of us, discussions between Federal Government, City Government, Developer and of course UNESCO and ICOMOS.

Apart from these forthcoming discussions we are already working on the report's recommendations concerning strategic and operative measures for the protection of our world heritage sites, for example by developing the required management plan for the historic centre of Vienna. It is our intention to adopt this management plan in the Vienna City Council together with an amendment of our building regulations with the aim to implement the protection of our World Heritage in all future planning processes. As you surely know, the development

of a management plan might require up to two years, however, we are well in time now, regarding the fact, that the working team includes independent scientists and experts, for example from Vienna's Technical University and from ICOMOS Austria.

As to the Heumarkt Project let me inform you on the latest developments.

First of all let me explain to you the procedure regarding the project, which is actually a bit complicated.

In June 2017 a zoning plan was adopted in the Municipal Council of Vienna, allowing for the project in discussion to be realized at this area. A zoning plan provides legal certainty for developers. At the same time a comprehensive urban development contract was concluded to secure all wishes of the City of Vienna and those of all the stakeholders in this area. At the beginning of this year the developer has submitted filings for the required building permit with the City of Vienna. This means that the developer has a zoning certificate, but not yet a building permit. The building negotiations have not even started yet.

Apart from that, the Austrian Supreme Administrative Court is currently checking the Environmental Sustainability of the project. The possible obligation for the developer to undertake an environmental impact assessment would mean a further delay of the project for years. The court case in this matter is still in progress, the result not to be expected within the next weeks.

All in all, the Heumarkt project is intensely discussed and developed and we are working on a lot of tasks, so that there is definitely no reason to believe that any construction measures might start on this area within the next two years.

Given the fact, that our top priority is to remain one of the world's heritage sites, we would support the idea that the Historic Center of Vienna should remain on the Red List of Endangered World Heritage Sites for the time being. This will give us time to work on the recommendations of the Mission's Report and prove that - although we are convinced that the area in discussion is in urgent need of development - we take the responsibility of world heritage very seriously.

Finally, taking all these facts into account, I want to emphasize that we appreciate the recommendation for a two years moratorium which we are determined to observe. That will help us to find an adequate solution to develop

the project Heumarkt in compliance with the World Heritage. If a solution can be found at an earlier date we will of course be happy to be removed from the danger list as soon as possible.